



FOR THE BOYS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

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FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 28, 1878.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



ONE ARM STILL CLASPED THE CAPTAIN, THE OTHER CLUTCHED THE BLOOD-STAINED FLAG.

RAVEN'S NEST; OR, THE CRUISE OF THE "FIREFLY." CHAPTER IX.

THE FATE OF NORMAN HOWARD.

FOR many days the young heir of Courtney Grange lay hovering between life and death.

Doctor Hardy had taken him from the arms of Brawny Dick, and very tenderly he was taken below.

At first all feared the cruel exposure for so many hours at the mast-head in the sickening, broiling sun would prove too much for his delicate constitution, and even stalwart Captain Lewis inquired very anxiously hour by hour after the welfare of the friendless lad.

As for Brawny Dick, he prowled about the

decks seeking an opportunity to square accounts with Peter Sharke, not that he had been in any way the cause of young Arthur's being mast-headed.

But there was a grudge between them, and Brawny Dick yearned for satisfaction.

Two others were on board, who, if they did not exactly thirst for the traitor's blood, meant him mischief.

Tommy Brine and Humpty Jim,

Despised and derided by the officers and crew of the "Fighting Firefly," Peter Sharke, seeking for a friend, took to his bosom the big-headed black, Hannibal Jupiter Joe, with what result will hereafter be seen.

Meanwhile incidents on shore claim our attention.

It will be remembered that when the commodore saw the figure of Norman Howard in the boat, and heard the alarm bell ring from Courtney Grange, he fell back senseless.

Thus enabling the murderer to escape.

For two days he lay tended in the lonely lighthouse by the old housekeeper.

On the third day he recovered sufficiently to write a letter.

It was addressed to the Lords of the Admiralty, and was sent by special messenger.

There were no trains or telegraphs in those days, and the body of the ill-fated Lord of Courtney Grange was laid in the family vault long before the messenger returned.

The commodore received the reply silently. He dismissed the messenger, and in the silence of the night he went to a cupboard in the lighthouse observatory, and drew forth—first, a big old Bible; secondly, a dispatch box; thirdly a faded, well-worn, naval suit; fourthly, the hat and sword of an admiral in his Majesty's service.

Months had elapsed since Norman Howard had fled.

None knew of his guilt—so, at least, he reasoned—and now he had returned to claim the fruit of his crime.

Courtney Grange for himself and for his son.

Courtney Grange and the wild towers of Raven's Nest.

There was no one to oppose his claim, and proudly and exultantly he faced the family lawyers, when, with his creole wife and son, Andrea, he proclaimed himself lord of the estates.

There was a look of solid joy in the eyes of Andrea Howard as he saw himself installed the coming heir.

He remembered when young Arthur Courtney had turned him from the gates.

As for his mother, her creole blood was fired.

Only the attesting signatures of the lawyers were needed, and all was theirs.

Norman Howard—now lord of Courtney Grange.

Her son heir!

This, indeed, was triumph and revenge.

Soon to be dashed to earth.

There had been a loud and hasty summons at the gates.

Voices demanding admittance in the king's name.

And as the traitorous trio started appalled, a woman, pale, dishevelled, burst into the room.

"Margaret!"

It escaped Norman Howard's lips in a whisper. How fierce was the woman's reply!

"Ay, Margaret, who witnessed your dastardly murder of your cousin. Margaret, who swore to dash the cup of triumph from your lips, who stands here, not alone, to bring you to your doom."

One by one they filed into the room.

Officers and men of his Majesty's service, well armed.

And in rear of them stalked the stately form of the old commodore.

The old man of the lighthouse no longer.

In his admiral's uniform he was recognised at once, and his name escaped a dozen lips.

"Admiral Sir Digby Courtney!"

Norman Howard's face went ashly pale.

"You?" he gasped.

"I!" replied the commodore. "I saw you on the night of your cruel murder of my son. I denounce you now as his assassin, poor lad. When his brother Tempest went down with the 'Dreadnought,' I and his child escaped—that child whom I have reared under my own care, whom I have disguised from his family—escaped the general doom, that child whom you have known as Harold Wynne, and to foil your schemes, villain, I proclaim him heir to Courtney Grange."

What a look of hate, of baffled rage, settled on the features of Norman Howard!

He gave his wife a quick glance, and immediately she and Andrea left the room.

Then, facing the commodore, he spoke coldly—"Sir Digby Courtney, you have balked me of my revenge. A time will come when I will answer and refute your charges; till then attempt not to follow me or it will be death."

The commodore stood directly in front of him, barring his egress.

It was a cowardly blow, but before a weapon could be raised he struck the admiral to the floor and dashed from the room.

If the commodore had been beloved while only known as the strange old man of the lighthouse, how much more was he revered when known as Admiral Sir Digby Courtney, Lord of Raven's Nest and Courtney Grange.

Wild were the revengeful shouts, as officers and men followed the fleeing form of Norman Howard.

Swift of foot, he eluded his pursuers, and dashed onwards to the lofty peak of Raven's Nest.

He had made this his home.

Wife and son were already there when, with haggard looks and bloodshot eyes, he burst into the tower.

"All—all is lost!" he gasped; "the hell-hounds are on our track. What can we do?"

"Do!" his wife's voice was strangely calm. "Slay them as they come, and, if needs be, die."

A cry from below aroused his savage nature. Up the steep face of the rock the blue-jackets were coming by twos and twos.

He rushed back into the tower of Raven's Nest.

"Slay them!" he cried, re-echoing his wife's words. "The gun, the torch! Ay—ay, to perdition with them all!"

Down the black incline went a vivid flash of light; then followed a terrible roar.

His wife's hand had fired the gun, and one by one the advancing sailors tumbled headlong into the boiling surf beneath.

Like a madman his tones rang out—

"Come on—to death. Norman Howard is not to be taken alive."

An answering cry came on the air, and, looking down, he saw the spectre form of Margaret.

"This way," he heard her cry; "tempt not fate; the cliff is undermined, and those monsters are doomed."

Silence succeeded the freezing tones of the woman, who seemed destined to be his fate.

Darkness had come rapidly on.

Beneath the base of Raven's Nest the wild sea surged and foamed.

On the peak above stood the three figures, Norman Howard, wife, and son.

The murderous gun, again reloaded, pointed down the steep. This time, Andrea Howard held the burning torch.

Norman Howard, ghastly and trembling, peered into the depths of darkness at their feet.

His wife stood undaunted and calm.

For a few minutes all was quiet.

No enemy was to be seen.

Presently a few big drops of rain fell at intervals.

Suddenly a flash of lightning illumined the scene.

Norman Howard clutched his wife's arm.

"Fire!" he cried.

The lurid flash lighted up the Raven's Nest; but no cry of anguish told that the murderous missiles had done their work.

Hardly had the roar of the cannon died away than there came such a flash of lightning and roar of thunder as seemed to shake the very heavens.

Another flash, and Norman Howard saw the figures of his foes, headed by the commodore, sword in hand, dashing up the adjoining cliff.

They were headed by Margaret, whose mocking laugh froze Norman Howard's blood as he cried—

"Load again! Train the gun this way. The fates fight for us—ha! ha!—our foes come to their doom!"

Andrea Howard rapidly re-loaded the gun. Quickly it was trained to sweep the opposite height.

Had it been discharged then not one of those advancing could have lived before the storm of grape with which the arch murderer had loaded the weapon.

But, even as the blazing torch was applied, there came another blinding flash and peal of thunder, and in an instant, with an appalling crash, cliff, peak and tower of Raven's Nest, with the three desperate beings above, went hurtling down into the surging abyss below.

It was as if the earth had given way. For a second or so there was an ominous silence.

Then from out the abyss rose a cloud and a roar.

One fitful flash played over the scene.

The waves ebbed from the engulfed ruins, and nothing was heard save the sighing of the wind and the murmur of the chafing sea.

CHAPTER X.

ARTHUR COURTNEY'S FIRST ACTION.

THE British fleet, under command of the immortal Nelson, were cruising in quest of the foe.

War with the French and their allies had again broken out, and our ships and seamen were about to be engaged in those grand though terrible encounters which were to culminate in the glories of the Nile and Trafalgar.

Hitherto the "Firefly" had not been in action, and it was with a hearty hurrah that the brave fellows on board heard they were to be dispatched on a special service wherein they must conquer or die.

Since the second outbreak the merchant fleet of England had been harassed by a lawless marauder known as Paulo Sangrado, who, commanding a first-rate war vessel and having under his orders a crew of desperadoes not easily matched even in those adventurous times, had, while avoiding conflict with King George's fleet, fallen upon unarmed and inoffensive vessels, and ruthlessly destroyed all on board.

It was rumoured that his secret cause of quarrel against the English was that his only sister had been basely betrayed by a young English officer, who, having won her love, had left her to confess her shame and die at her brother's feet.

From that hour Paulo Sangrado had sworn revenge, and many a bloodstained deck or burning hulk had attested the implacability of his revenge.

His ship, the "Santa Anna," was well armed and manned.

Her crew were primed to their deeds of cruelty and carnage by their share of the booty found on board their ill-fated prey.

One of the British war sloops had been so roughly handled by the "Santa Anna" that she was, in a crippled condition, taken prisoner by the French.

And it was this vessel—a veritable pirate—that the gallant "Firefly" was to overhaul and conquer.

"Sail ho!" sang out the look-out from the top.

A thrill ran through the hearts of the gallant seamen of the "Firefly."

Captain Lewis scanned the distant horizon. Only a speck was apparent.

It grew larger.

Huge white sails bellied in the breeze.

Captain Lewis gave the glass to his first-lieutenant.

"What say you?"

"The pirate, sir," was the answer.

"The pirate!"

From stem to stern rang an angry shout.

Then the order came.

"Pipe all hands."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Clear the decks for action."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Soon the big pirate-ship loomed upon them.

Arthur Courtney sprang up the gangway, and made his way to the quarter-deck.

Disregarding the captain's frown, he stood before him.

"We are going into action," he said, timidly.

"Sir!"

The young heir of Courtney Grange crept closer to his captain.

"Let me fight, sir," he said, and his eyes filled with tears. "I will not be a coward."

There was a suspicious moisture in the eyes of the captain of the "Firefly" as he turned away from the beseeching lad.

He turned to the first lieutenant—

"Under no pretence suffer this lad to face the enemy."

CHAPTER XI.

THE 'TWEEN DECKS OF THE FRIGATE "FIREFLY." WITH our readers' permission we will now descend to the 'tween decks of the glorious old frigate the "Firefly."

She was one of those comfortable vessels such as Nelson fought in when England's security depended on her "wooden walls."

Everything was kept in such order that when needed for warfare or otherwise there was no confusion, so that the 'tween decks were, comparatively speaking, realms of happiness, contentment, and bliss.

But in all communities there are one or more discontented beings, and so it was on board the "Firefly."

One individual in particular who suffered from this complaint was a gentleman named Tweezers, who, it was known, was a member of the medical profession.

That is to say, he was attendant to Doctor Hardy, and was very useful when the operation was needed of amputating a limb.

He was handy, too, when a bone required setting, or a tooth had to be drawn; and in blood-letting, which was greatly adopted by the faculty in those days, he was a perfect leech.

In form he was not unlike a shot rammer, the ramming home portion representing his head, and the staff his body, which in no part was thicker than a stout man's thigh.

He was, in fact, all head, legs, and wings; his body not being more than half the ordinary length for his height, which was quite six feet.

He wore a blue claw hammer coat, tight trousers, and, above the exceptional articles in the way of clothing on board a ship, braces, and straps at the bottom of his pants.

We have been particular in describing Mr. Tweezers, as he will take a prominent part in our story, and now we go on.

The ship's bell had struck, the watches been changed, and a bevy of young middies were seated in the gun room round the table, their heads clustered together as if they were discussing some mischief.

Presently a head was thrust through the open door, and a pair of rolling eyes leered—

"Yeth, dey berry happy," muttered a low voice, "dey berry confulable, indeed. Yah, if I gib dem one on de nob how dey jump."

It was Jupiter who spoke.

He held a biscuit in his ebony fist, and he raised his hand once or twice, as if in the act of throwing it.

"Yeth, I startle dem, I guess," he continued. "I give dem one 'lectric shock; I make dem hop like a couple of fleas."

He raised his hand again, but as he did so the eye of Harold Wynne arrested him—

"Hallo, Jupe! What wind brings you sailing aft; are you out of provisions?"

There was a smirk on the young middy's lips as he spoke, but Hannibal Jupiter Joe did not observe this, his large lugubrious eyes were always on the roll, and, as the saying is, all over the ship, or the gun-room, nautically speaking, at once.

"Yas, Marster Wynne, short ob stores, but got cake here and no water."

"Ah, you want a drink, Jupe," said the middy with a sly grin. "You couldn't drink anything but water, I suppose?"

"Can't get eben dat, marster. Neber seed such a dry trip as dis; shall all get dry rotten afore de commission ober."

"Perhaps he could drink a drop of rum," chimed in Courtney, touching the others with

his feet; "but they say it's awfully bilious stuff."

"Neber mind bilious, so long as de rum comes first. I don't mind turning yallar as a guinea—I not hab one lately."

"Then we will give him a nip," said Edgar Percy. "We can't drink it, and if Jupe don't mind having the bile who else is to trouble about it?"

"Nobody. Tink Hannibal Jupiter Joe not know what him about—tink him not know what am de best physic for him? Jupe hab de bile! Lor bless you, take all de rum in de British navy to gib Jupe de bile."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed little Willie, who, of course, had been one of the council. "It would take all the rum in the 'Yellow Magpie' to give you the yellow jaundice. Ha! ha! ha!"

The boys all laughed in chorus, and Jupiter joined in heartily.

"Yah! yah! yah! Golly! it take all de rum in de West Indies to turn Jupiter yallar."

Arthur Courtney went to the mess locker, and took out a bottle, remarking, as he drew the cork, "This is fine stuff, regular old Jamaica, and no gammon."

"Moder's milk," said Jupiter, his big, round eyes dilating; "proper stuff," and he rubbed his broad chest downwards in anticipation of the treat in store for him.

"Smell it first, for fear it makes you sick," said Courtney, tauntingly. "It might go against you, you know, and we don't want to put you in the sick bay."

"Oh, golly!" exclaimed Jupiter, rolling up his eyes till only the whites were visible. "I could die under such stuff as dat. Pour it out, Master Courtney. Don't set my mouth a-watering all down my back."

Courtney peered him out a stiff tumbler, which the negro took down at one gulp, and licked his thick, black lips as a signal for more, but Courtney did not comply with his wishes at once.

"Dat's good, by gorra! Dat am more better dan all de 'Yaller Magpies' rolled togeder. Oh, if I only had enough of it to swim in!"

"And drink it as you liked," said Reginald. "Give him another toothful."

The expression of Jupiter's face set the boys roaring.

The gun-room had never rung with such hearty peals of laughter for many days; and when Jupiter poured out of sight the second glass, he made such comical faces that the boys fairly screamed.

"Have another," said Willie, who was as full of mischief as the rest, as soon as he could speak for laughing; and another was poured out, leaving scarcely an inch of liquor in the bottle.

Jupiter was now not only merry, but big and boastful.

He could fight, wrestle, run, or jump with anybody; climb up to the masthead, throw the main deck overboard, or take a reef in the spauker boom.

In the midst of this entertaining speech the frigate gave a roll, sending Jupiter, who was unsteady on his pins, like a sack of peas into the corner of the gun room, from which undignified position he was raised by the laughing middies, who took care to well puncture his big limbs with pins, an article of which Jupiter scarcely knew the existence.

"Yah-wah-wow-wo-we-wool!" yelled Jupiter, as the sharp points assailed him in different parts; and the middies, of whose pranks he was blissfully ignorant, kept touching him up the more.

"Yah, yah, woo-oo-oo!" he at length broke out, and then the mirthful mids, endeavouring to look grave, placed him against the bulkhead.

"You've got the bile, Jupiter," said Stornton, looking him full in his queerly contorted face. "You'll never be an admiral, and you'll have to go to Tweezer for a dose. It's fortunate you were not born in Jamaica."

"You tink so, den you lie; me no go to Tweezer, but me be one admiral. Yeth thar, gib Hannibal de togs."

This was just what the mischievous middies were aiming for.

They well knew Jupe's weaknesses, and they had worked the oracle properly.

In one of the chests in the steerage there was an old, worn-out, rusty suit, a blue coat, with brass buttons and plated epaulettes, and an old cocked hat that had come to grief during a heavy gale.

This was quickly brought out, and Jupiter was rigged first with a large stand-up collar and a white waistcoat, that had to be split half-way up the back, and laced together with rope-yarns to make it fit him.

And then his brawny arms were squeezed into the coat-sleeves, the waist of which was half-way up his back, and the shoulders of which were so narrow for his broad shoulders that he was like one fixed in a straight jacket.

Jupiter submitted to all this without a murmur until he began to move, and then he found that his arms were fixed out on each side like the arms of a signal post.

He could certainly bend his arms a little, but very little, and as for making his hands meet, it was impossible to get within three feet of each other.

"Hang dis caper!" he grunted, looking, if we may so speak, red in the face; "if dis be what you call making an admirable ob me, I'll be a codfish."

The middies were nearly bursting with laughter, but strove all they knew to look grave.

"You are all right. You look jolly; and, what's more, you look noble."

"Me no feel dat way den," said Jupiter, scarcely knowing whether to be angry or otherwise. "Golly! Me feel like one boiled porpoise."

"You'll be all right presently; have another toothful of physic—a drop more rum—and that will put you all square."

A cry from above disturbed their pranks—"The 'Santa Anna'!"

It is a question whether Hannibal Jupiter Joe and Brawny Dick were more eager for the fray.

After his discomforture by the middies, the herculean black yearned to have an encounter with a foeman, if not worthy of his steel, at least to be vanquished by his fists.

Two of our other friends, Tony Brine and Humpty Jim, burned with a similar ardour.

Not that they enjoyed being pressed in his Majesty's service.

Their only consolation was that the treacherous revenue spy, Peter Sharke, was on board.

They meant mischief, and would have again played their tricks upon him had not the "Santa Anna" hove in sight, intent upon giving battle to the "Firefly."

"I see plainly," said Captain Lewis, to his first lieutenant, "we shall have a warm brush with this devil, but if I don't splinter his timbers before I have handled him half an hour may I never again tread the deck of the 'Fighting Firefly.'"

Our young English boys can well understand the thrill of joy that seemed to pervade the officers, middies, and men of the fighting "Firefly" when the "Santa Anna," with all sails set and guns run out, bore down upon them.

Captain Lewis spoke.

"Lay aft!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"We have to take this ship."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Fire, and let boarders wait."

No shot from the "Firefly."

But from the "Santa Anna" came a full broadside, tearing asunder the shrouds, sails, and rigging of its adversary, and stretching many of its gallant crew bleeding on the deck.

Then the "Firefly" answered.

A sheet of flame went up aloft, and the "Santa Anna," big as she was, rocked in the storm of canister and grape.

Another more furious discharge came from the "Firefly," and the two vessels were alongside.

"Boarders!"

Captain Lewis stood upon the quarter-deck,

A hail of shot and splinters had left him unscathed.

Beside him crouched, or rather knelt, a pale-faced lad.

Young Arthur Courtney, striving to break from the grip of the two marines and Dr. Hardy.

Falling back sickly as he heard the loud hurrahs of the boarding party, as they leapt on board the "Santa Anna."

Boys, you may be sure that Brawny Dick was one of the first to leap on board the pirate.

Behind him came the big black, Hannibal Jupiter Joe, slashing right and left with a tremendous axe, obtained none knew where, and to the surprise even of his own party, dropping the pirates one by one.

By this time the decks of both ships were slippery with gore.

Captain Lewis, having gripped his enemy, fought him as only an Englishman could fight.

The pirate captain of the "Santa Anna," recognising the mettle of his antagonist, had given orders for no quarter.

And fierce and bloody was the fray.

You lads of England who have not been in battle can have little idea of the terrible turmoil when a boarding party assails the defenders.

Young Arthur Courtney watched his brother middies, Edgar Percy, Harold Wynne (his cousin though he knew him not), cutting, shooting, and dashing amidst the fire and smoke.

And was about to spring from the "Firefly" to the enemy's deck when a cry, I had almost said an oath, from Captain Lewis startled him.

A huge chain shot from the "Santa Anna" cut the mizen-mast of the "Firefly" in twain, and brought the flag of old England fluttering to the deck.

Bleeding and begrimed as the sailors of the "Firefly" were, a murmur of rage and indignation arose amongst them.

To their audacious enemy it seemed as if they had struck their flag.

The gallant banner, the Union Jack, fell at the feet of young Arthur Courtney.

Disregarding the order of Captain Lewis, he broke from the grasp of the two marines, and sprang amidst his comrades fighting aboard the "Santa Anna."

Amidst the leaden hail of musketry, flying past the bloodthirsty points of pike and cutlass, armed only with a short sword in his right hand, while his left held aloft the shot-torn flag of the "Firefly," he flew past the enemy.

Away to the mast where proudly waved the flag of the "Santa Anna."

One slash of his cutlass, and that came fluttering at his feet.

Captain Lewis watched the brave act, and his heart bounded with delight.

He saw the boy spring to his feet, and with the impetuosity of a Trojan hero, attempt to defend himself.

In vain.

A dozen bullets reached the brave lad's breast.

Three or four murderous pikes forced their way, as it were, to his heart, as the pirates surrounded him.

From the "Firefly" Captain Lewis spoke trumpet-tongued—

"Boarders ahoy! on your lives save young Arthur Courtney."

There was a rush of British tars.

Edgar Percy and Reginald Stornnton dashed in, too late to save.

The Corsican captain of the pirate ship, stealing behind the falling lad, sent his brutal blade through and through his body, and the lad sank, as it seemed, to rise no more.

There was a look of grim triumph on the pirate captain's face as Brawny Dick met him.

Twice their weapons crossed, and then the Corsican fell, pierced through the throat, the hilt of Brawny Dick's cutlass knocking against his windpipe.

What a fearful cry came from the throats of our gallant tars! A hundred at least on either side lay gashed and bleeding on the decks of the "Santa Anna."

But the murderous work went on around the stricken form of young Arthur Courtney—

went on until not one of the ruthless crew of the "Santa Anna" remained to wield a blade; and on the blood-stained slippery deck of the pirate ship Brawny Dick, the negro, the middies, surrounded the puling lad.

Brawny Dick stooped over him.

"Cheer up, cheer up, dear lad," he said.

Young Arthur's pallid lips moved.

"Let me—die—on board," he murmured; and turned his gaze towards the "Firefly."

The rough hearts understood him. Very tenderly he was borne aboard.

Doctor Hardy and Captain Lewis stood apart.

"Is there no hope?" the latter asked.

"None," was the reply. "He is bleeding inwardly to death."

Just then the dying boy caught sight of his captain.

Doctor Hardy bent over him.

The lad's words came in a faint whisper—

"Tell—Captain—Lewis I was—no—coward. Let—me—die—here—and bury—me—in—this shroud."

His hand clenched upon the Union Jack.

Captain Lewis was stricken to the heart.

Pushing Doctor Hardy aside, he knelt by the dying lad.

"My poor boy! my child!" he said, huskily. "My dear, brave lad!"

Young Arthur's eyes brightened.

He placed his arms round Captain Lewis's neck.

"Tell—mother," he whispered, "I—would—not—fight—a—friend."

The thin lips grew ghastly.

"Bury—me—in—the—flag."

One arm still clasped the captain's neck, the other clutched the blood-stained flag.

The pale face fell back.

Arthur Courtney was dead.

Unmindful of the tears that fell hot and fast upon his brow, Doctor Hardy roused the captain of the "Firefly."

"Be yourself, sir; you unman the crew. Arouse, it is too late to mourn over the death of this dear lad."

The captain's eyes were blinded with tears.

"He has died a hero's death," he whispered; "he shall have a hero's grave."

(To be continued.)

HAPPY HAL; OR, TRUE TO THE CORE.

CHAPTER LXX.

A SAD CAT-AS-TROPHE.

At the moment Mr. Wanstead entered the oaken chamber, Hal and Herbert felt as if the floor of their hiding place would open and swallow them.

Herbert's father took a good survey of the apartment, but nothing in it appeared to have been disturbed.

Thanks to Happy Hal's forethought, he had taken the sticks with him and placed them on the pegs over their heads.

Thus far, then, all was safe, but what if the old gentleman should make a closer inspection of the room?

Hal, mind you, thought of all this.

He thought of the disgrace, and dreaded the consequences.

He was grateful when he saw, through his peephole, Mr. Wanstead make for the door.

"Confound it!" cried that gentleman, taking another cursory glance around; "there must be something wrong. I begin to think, after all, that there is some truth in the room being haunted."

Then he added, in a breath more low and solemn, but loud enough for the strained ears of the listeners to hear—"I will lock the place up—it shall never again be opened, and the barred window will prevent the access in that direction of any intruders."

The boys shuddered at these words, as well they might.

To be locked in that dismal chamber in the dark was enough to raise their fears.

Their blood began to creep when they heard the creak of the hinges and the door close.

"We're trapped!" gasped Herbert.

"We are!" muttered Hal, as the perspiration broke out on their pallid brows in large beads.

Then they crept from their concealment, and listened as only those in a similar position could listen.

They could plainly hear the footsteps of Mr. Wanstead receding, and their hearts sank like lead.

They were painfully aware that Phil and Tom were ignorant of the locality of the second door key, and this added to their alarm.

As they strained their eyes in the darkness—for the heavy curtains were drawn to—they fancied they could see the ghastly skull they had drawn on the panel grinning at them.

This was horrible.

In agonizing torture Hal groped his way to the door and turned the handle, when, to his surprise and exquisite joy, the door opened and they saw a streak of moonlight.

"Thank heaven!" murmured Herbert, overcome with the sight, and without more delay the scared adventurers returned to their room.

Fortunately for them, Mr. Wanstead, in his excitement, had taken the key of the room among the others to his bedroom, and had returned to fetch it.

Hal, with his eye at the key-hole, saw the old gentleman wander forth again with the light, watched his return, and heard him utter several loud and startled exclamations, such as were not his wont.

He had stepped on something that penetrated his stocking feet, and which he on examination discovered to be portions of walnut shells.

The boys breathed a sigh of relief when they heard his bedroom door finally close, and then Phil and Tom, who jointly occupied one of the two beds, broke into a stifled roar.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Hal, who, having plugged the keyhole, proceeded to light the lantern. "It's very well for you, who have taken no share in the risk."

"Ho, ho!" laughed the perturbable Tom, "hav'nt we, though? We've had all the danger too, while you've been gone; have we not Phil?"

"I should think so," was the reply.

"If you tell that fib again I'll prop you," said Herbert, slowly doffing his clothes.

"Will you?" said Phil, sitting up.

"I can repeat what I've said, Mr. Fast, and yet tell no fib."

Happy Hal then interposed.

"Let's hear your wonderful tale," said he.

"Well then," explained Phil, "Tom's nearly been killed by a cat."

"Go on," said Herbert, excited; "was it a gray one?"

"Yes, and a wopper too. Just as you and Hal left we stripped, and were getting into bed, when the cat, who had sought sanctuary in the blankets during the hubbub, gave a spring."

"Bosh!" cried Hal.

"It's true."

"All right, Phil; spin your yarn out," said Herbert. "It's a cat story, you know."

"Well, she sprang out, hit Tom in the wind, threw him on his back, and began to claw at him, tooth and nail."

"The brute! Did'nt you smash her?" asked Herbert.

"No; I collared her by the scurf of the neck and the loose skin of the bottom of her back, and held her pinned so that she could not move, nor cry out, only snarl, you know, which she did, while Tom shod her paws with the walnut shells we had made into crackers; and then we turned her adrift."

"Bravo! But how did you get them to hold on, old boy?" queried Hal, suspiciously.

"Tied them on, of course, with twine," answered Tom Catchit. "Do you think that we are fibbing? If you do, go and look at the window where she made her exit."

There was no necessity for either Hal or Herbert to do this.

It flashed to them at once that this was the cause of the commotion they had heard, and that the something that crawled about their

legs when they were in darkness in the oaken chamber was no other than the Mistress Grimaldi.

"Phil," said Herbert, gravely, "your joke might have got us into serious trouble. My father nearly discovered us, and I have no doubt he has portions of those shells sticking in his stocking feet."

"Never mind, old boy; you escaped. I saved Tom's life, and he had revenge. Let us forget all about it and go to sleep."

A few minutes later the boys slept soundly.

But what of Mr. Catchit?

That ill-used individual had crept to Mr. Wanstead's apartment, and, taking a blanket off the bed, had rolled himself up on the sofa, where he laid and pondered, vowing all sorts of vengeance against the boys, especially against his son, Phil Catchit, whom, in his imagination, he had already flayed alive.

Mr. Wanstead, on his return, quietly divested himself of his hose, and removed the pieces of walnut shell that still adhered to them, and at length, wearied with thinking over the strange incidents of the night, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER LXXI.

A LIVELY GARDEN SCENE AT WANSTEAD FARM.

At the first break of dawn Mr. Catchit, who was an early riser, was moving.

With an angry brow he sallied forth into the grounds to cool his heated brain.

"Dash it!" he muttered, half aloud; "dash it. I would like to know whether there was any reality in what I saw last night, for I did see it, or whether those imps played me a trick."

"Ah, what's that," he added, suddenly elevating his brows and straining his ears.

A strange sound, something like the snoring of a dozen pigs, was plainly audible.

It came from the direction of the rustic bower in which he had received his unpleasant bath.

With cautious steps he wended his way there. With guarded movements he peered in at the opening.

What a sight met his gaze!

Two objects, for they appeared to be nothing more, met his astonished vision.

Two sleeping beauties they might have been described in Jowles's waxwork, for beauties they were, and highly coloured.

These two curiosities were no others than the virtuous Samson and the pompous Bullyboy. They were seated in the little rustic bower, their heads laid back, their noses slanting towards the sky, and their bodies, up to their necks, encased in what would have passed for the shells of alligators, after they had crawled from a muddy lagoon and basked in the sun. To be plain, they were coated about half-an-inch thick in mire, which had dried and cracked, giving it the appearance of scales.

Mr. Catchit gazed on the sleeping pair with strangely conflicting feelings.

He recognised them at once, in spite of their mud-grimed visages.

His perplexity was what he should do with them.

The horsewhip of course flashed first to his mind, and then he was wicked enough to suggest putting a lighted match under their noses; but while he was thinking of this, something hard struck him on the point of his own nasal organ, causing him to look up.

As he did so something else tapped his nose just beneath the tip, making him cry out with the sharp pain.

"Dash it!" he exclaimed; but he had scarcely uttered the words, when a clattering against his straw hat made him stagger back and hold up his arms to shield his face.

The noise he made awoke the ever-watchful Samson, and as he started he so stuck his elbow into Bullyboy's ribs as to wake him also.

"Perlice, perlice! I'll run yer in," broke out Bullyboy, opening his eyes in dreamy stupor.

"Hold yer jaw," whispered Samson, shivering like a leaf, not only from the sight he beheld before him, but with the cold chill his body had received during the last few days.

"I'll run yer in, yer vagabonds," again growled

Bullyboy. "I'll not be waylaid and murdered on the Queen's highway."

"You'll be kicked out of here if you are not quiet," groaned Samson, his teeth chattering a tune.

"Oh, lor! Where am I?" Bullyboy exclaimed, opening his eyes, and rubbing them.

Mr. Catchit by this time was performing a series of antics—spinning round, his arms folded across his face, warding off (if we must let the reader into the secret) a shower of peas which were pouring from a number of little tubes from under the sash of the bedroom window of the boys.

Round and round he spun, and yet faster and faster poured the hurtling shot, striking him seemingly on every side, and assailing him at all points at once.

"Dash it! dash it!" was the only exclamation he could make; and though he essayed several times to open his eyes, yet he was afraid to do so for fear of a shot striking them.

It was well for the four mischief lovers—who, with their pea-shooters thrust beneath the partly-open window, gazed with glistening eyes through the curtain at their writhing victim—that he did not see them.



TOM CATCHIT IN PERIL.

But their operations suddenly ceased when Mr. Catchit made a dart into a corner, where a tree sheltered him, and looked about.

By this time Bullyboy and his imperturbable chum had fully aroused to their danger.

Without waiting to ask any questions or risking further delay, they slunk from the little alcove, and, gaining the shelter of some bushes, took to their heels.

Mr. Catchit, on recovering himself and finding the shower had ceased, glanced furiously about him, his face as red as the comb of a bantam cock.

"Dash it!"

This seemed a favourite expression with the old gentleman on this auspicious morning.

"Dash it!"

He uttered this last so loud and vehement that he actually astonished himself.

"Dash it! What am I dashing?" he soliloquised. "Ah! there's those vagabonds in the arbour."

But they were gone, and this set his chagrin at its height.

Then his thoughts turned to the boys. He searched about for them; but his search, as we know, was vain; and so, vexed and wearied, he returned to the house.

On the threshold he met Mr. Wanstead, with his cheery look and ever-pleasant smile.

"Have you enjoyed your walk, Catchit?" he said, mistaking the ruddy glow on Mr. Catchit's cheeks for health.

"Enjoyed! Why where is there any enjoyment in a place like this?" he answered tartly.

"Why, what is the matter now?"

"Those boys."

"Boys?" exclaimed Mr. Wanstead, doubtful of his hearing.

"Yes, those boys, I said; they are worse than born savages, and you encourage them, sir."

"I encourage them?" said Mr. Wanstead, in surprise. "Remember, Mr. Catchit, I am in my own house. I respect you as my guest and brother-in-law, but I will not be dictated to—mind that."

At that moment James came downstairs, having summoned the boys to breakfast.

Full of life and jollity, as if the world had no cares for them, the four laughing boys skipped down the stairs into the hall.

They had no idea that the irate Mr. Catchit was there ready to receive them.

Fixing his eye savagely on the boys, he said—

"Is this how you are permitted to run about the house, like so many wild Indians?"

Herbert looked at his father appealingly.

Mr. Wanstead, however, took no notice of him, but led the way to the breakfast room, where a guest was already seated.

It was Mr. Splitback.

When he saw the boys he made a most horrible attempt at a smile, and nearly upset the table in rising to greet them.

The boys went through the ceremony of hand-shaking with not a little repugnance, but the meal passed off quietly, and Mr. Catchit and Mr. Splitback retired to another room to converse.

Hal, Herbert, Phil, and Tom then went into the grounds to spend the last few hours they were to be together in mischief, and a jolly time they had of it.

As they neared an especially favourite orchard, where caution boards were placed, announcing the proximity of spring guns and steel traps for the edification of the wary and unwary, they heard moans of the most agonising distress.

"Some vagabonds been poaching," said Herbert; but what was his surprise when he peered through the thick hedgerow and discovered Sampson and Bullyboy—the former with his leg in a man trap and the latter rolling on the ground, apparently in great agony, having been the victim of a spring gun?

Herbert laughed heartily; he knew that his father was too humane to hurt anybody.

The man trap was only made to hold, not to injure a trespasser, and the gun had nothing in it but a small charge of powder, and a paper wad.

"Come on, boys," said Herbert, leading the way; "let us end their miseries; I think they have suffered enough."

To the joy of those two unfortunate individuals, Samson and Bullyboy, the boys released them, and took them to a hut where Herbert regaled them with hot coffee, ham and eggs, and supplied them with more comfortable clothing, and then, giving them each a half a crown to help them on their way, admonished them to return home, giving them to understand that Mr. Splitback was in the vicinity.

This done, the boys returned to the house, where preparations were being made for Mr. Catchit's departure, and then Happy Hal and Herbert took leave of their companions with sorrowful hearts.

Phil Catchit and Tom waved them a last adieu, as Phil and Tom took their seats in the pair-horse vehicle behind Mr. Catchit and Splitback, whose whole conversation seemed to be about birchrods and canes.

And so the once merry, but now disconsolate party broke up, to meet, however, in the land of fun and mischief again, and to play their merry pranks, with which our young readers will hereafter become acquainted, if they read the side-splitting story, commencing in our next, of HAPPY HAL AND HIS BRAVE BOYS.

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

A GENTLEMAN who was in love with a lady, and had no opportunity to unfold his passion, appeared before her house, and cried out "Fire! fire! fire!" upon which she threw up the window and asked where; when he placed his hand upon his heart, and said, "Here, here, here."

AN INDIAN VERSION OF THE
ORIGIN OF WOMEN.

THERE was a time throughout the great world, says the Kickapoos, when neither on land nor in the water was there a woman to be found.

It was quite a still world to what it is now, and it was a peaceable world, too. Men were in plenty, made of clay, and sun dried; and they were then so happy—oh! so happy. Wars were none then, quarrels were none.

These first men were not quite like the men now, for they had tails. Very handsome tails they were, covered with long silky hair; very convenient were these appendages in a country where flies were numerous and troublesome. But the red men got proud; they were so happy, all went so well with them, that they forgot the Great Spirit. Wherefore he sent his chief Manitou to humble men by robbing them of what they most valued, and bestowing upon them a scourge and affliction adequate to their offence.

The spirit obeyed his master, and, coming on earth, demanded the instant sacrifice of the cherished member. Tail after tail was laid upon the block, and was amputated. The mission of the spirit was in part performed. He now took the several tails, and converted them into vain, noisy, chattering, and frisky women.

Upon these objects the Kickapoos now lavished their admiration. Yet the women had lost one essential quality which as tails they had possessed. The caudal appendage had brushed off man the worrying insects which sought to sting or suck his blood, whereas the new article was itself provided with a sharp sting, called by us a tongue; and, far from brushing annoyances off man, it became an instrument for accumulating them upon his body.

EDGAR ATHELING.

PART II.—OUTLAWED.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MYSTERY OF FARNLEIGH ABBEY.

BEFORE we describe the scene between Isaacs and his visitor, we must ask our readers to follow us to a spot not far from Nottingham, where there was a curious building known as Farnleigh Abbey.

It was called so apparently without reason, for there was nothing left of it which in any way resembled such a building.

A wide expanse of green surrounded it, while stately trees here and there rose amid the undergrowth, and long branches—

Interwove and wrought deep shade.

Passing through avenues of these, you suddenly came upon a rugged wall, broken in many places—very much resembling, in fact, the walls which surround the vineyards in France.

Coming upon it suddenly it seemed as if a high tower rose, like Cleopatra's needle, from a basement without any surroundings.

But when you leaned over the wall you beheld below you a quantity of masonry, fallen in every imaginable shape and position.

The place looked, in fact, as if it had been hurled down in every direction by artillery, for the very stones were rent and split, and forced one into the other.

The tower was the only part of the edifice which seemed untouched.

It still rose, grand and majestic as the old oaks which surrounded it; and it was scarcely noticeable where it had been detached from the rest of the great building, of which the wreck surrounding it only remained.

Years before it had been the scene of a terrible tragedy.

It had been given to a certain baron by the king in recognition of his services on the battlefield.

The baron had a young and lovely wife, and soon after he became the tenant and inhabitant of Farnleigh Abbey he received a message from the king desiring him to attend at court.

He had hardly been away from the abbey a

month before he received a series of anonymous letters, telling him that his young wife was faithless to her marriage vows.

These letters were afterwards proved to be the work of a former lover of the baron's lady, whom she had refused to marry.

The baron was of a fiercely jealous disposition, and the receipt of these letters inflamed all his evil passions.

Seeking the presence of the king, he sought and obtained permission to return to the abbey for a short time.

Striding into the hall, he loudly called for his wife.

On her arrival in his presence he fiercely upbraided her for her treachery and falseness.

In vain she pleaded—in vain she strove to prove her innocence.

The baron's jealousy had overcome his better reason, and nothing that could be said—no proof that could be adduced—served to drive from his mind the idea that he had been dishonoured by his wife.

Sending for his trusty henchman, he bade him seize his mistress and convey her to the dungeon in which the common malefactors of the village were confined.

Amidst tears and protestations of innocence the hapless lady was removed from the scene of luxury, and ruthlessly consigned to the solitude of her prison.

The baron, having thus ridden himself of the presence of his wife, quaffed deeply of the intoxicating wine.

He rose, swearing that he would instantly dispatch her.

As he started to his feet a loud clap of thunder awoke him to the remembrance that during the time he had been drinking a heavy storm of thunder and lightning had commenced to pass over the castle and its neighbourhood.

But even the wild warning of the elements was insufficient to prevent the baron from attempting to carry out his fell design.

This he was fated never to do.

As, with his heavy two-handed sword, he strode towards the door, the most fearful crash of thunder, preceded by blinding flashes of lightning, staggered even his iron nerves for the instant.

Stricks resounded through the building.

The lightning had struck the abbey. The whole edifice was speedily in flames, and ere the drunken baron could escape from the walls he fell a victim to the all-devouring element.

The abbey and all its inhabitants—saving only the keep and the unhappy lady therein confined—were totally destroyed.

None knowing of the presence of the only living being—the lady in her dungeon, she was left to her fate.

Many months elapsed before the superstitious rustics could be induced to visit the spot.

When at length one of their members summoned up courage to do so, he discovered among the ruins of the abbey itself the charred remains of the baron and his retainers; while in searching the only portion remaining, the Cleopatra-like tower, he found the mouldering skeleton of the unfortunate lady still lying where she had slowly died the worst of all lingering deaths—starvation.

The tower where this tragedy occurred was, at the time of our story, covered with ivy, while wild flowers bloomed in the cracks and crevices of the masonry—typical of the innocence of the fair victim.

On the night before the arrival of Edgar Atheling at the place where he and Zeila had met with such rude treatment at the hands of Scotch Archie, the Governor of Nottingham Castle was seated in his private room, writing dispatches, when there was a sudden knock at the door.

A knock which startled him, for he had heard no sound!

He had heard no one ascending the stairs.

But he was a brave man, and had no hesitation in his voice or mind as he said—

"Come in."

The door was quickly opened, and a man with a slouched hat, and wrapped in a cloak, entered hurriedly.

He removed his hat and bowed deeply; and as he slightly threw aside his cloak the governor could see that he was cased in mail armour, black as the night.

"Whence come you, and what message do you bring?" cried Sir Hugh Darrell, the governor.

"I am from the king," said the new-comer.

"And you bring a letter, doubtless?" said the governor, holding out his hand somewhat impatiently to receive it.

"No," replied the man. "No. I have here the king's signet ring to prove that I am a royal messenger."

As he said these words he held out to Sir Hugh Darrell a small ring, in which sparkled a familiar-looking gem.

"Yes," said the governor. "See, now, quick with your message. If the king has sent verbally to me your news must be of great import."

"It is, I believe," replied the man.

"Believe!" cried the governor, testily. "You must know."

"No, Sir Hugh," returned the man. "Those who have the king's message for you are in Mansfield Wood, near Farnleigh Abbey. All is safe. Bring some attendant to make sure; but be in haste, I pray you, for I believe that the news they have for you will admit of no delay."

The governor had no suspicion that at the very moment this man, whose name was Brandon, was speaking to him, four bloodthirsty wretches who sought his life were waiting for him in the wood.

He hastily prepared for his journey, and, having hidden his son Clarence to see to necessary matters in his absence, and be on the watch for any emergency that might come, he quitted the castle with his treacherous companion.

So it is often.

He little suspects the terrible events which are hurrying towards him at express speed.

He had no reason to believe that the ring which had been shown him as that of the king was a false one, or stolen.

And so, confidently, he quitted the gates of the old town of Nottingham, and made in the direction of Mansfield Forest.

The night was intensely dark, as the four conspirators crouched behind the ruined walls, awaiting the approach of their confederate and his victim.

"Brandon is a long time in coming," said one of the dark-browed villains.

Scarcely had he spoken when a curious-looking figure vaulted over the wall.

He was almost entirely naked, nothing but the skins of some wild animal being fastened around his loins.

His hair was long, black, and unkempt.

He appeared to be about seventeen years of age, and was known in the neighbourhood as the companion of all the poachers, robbers, and dangerous characters of the country.

"Hist!" he cried, as soon as he had joined the four companions. "Hist! I hear the sound of hoofs upon the road."

"Ha!" replied a swarthy ruffian. "Then now comes our time for revenge."

Not another word was spoken.

The four men crouched down again behind the wall, while the wild stripling, who carried in his hand a short rope with a running noose at one end, leaped the wall with the agility of a monkey.

He immediately laid himself flat upon the ground, in the shadow and concealment of the ivy on the walls.

The sound of hoofs came nearer and nearer, and in a short time the governor and his four attendants, guided by Brandon, reined in their horses within ten yards of the spot where the stripling lay concealed.

Here Brandon informed the governor that his attendants must wait his return.

The necessary order having been given, the governor slowly advanced towards the wall, followed silently by Brandon.

The darkness of the night prevented the governor's men from following his movements with their eyes.

The governor's horse was forced, from the nature of the ground, to proceed slowly, and to lift his feet well up at every step, to avoid stones and boughs of trees.

As soon as he reached the spot where the wild lad lay an arm protruded from the ivy, the noose of the rope was slipped round the horse's fore-foot, a jerk was given, the horse stumbled, and the unfortunate governor fell prone to the earth.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE MURDER AT THE OLD TOWER—THE SURPRISE AT NOTTINGHAM—THE START OF THE ARMY.

BRANDON, seeing the governor was dismounted, drew his dagger from its sheath, and dealt a cowardly blow at the fallen man ere he could rise to his feet.

The governor, however, at length gained a footing, and, drawing his sword, called loudly for his assistants.

He furiously rushed on Brandon, dealing him savage and well-directed blows.

Brandon defended himself vigorously.

The clashing of steel, and the cries for help, informed the governor's men that all was not as it should be.

Quickly dismounting from their horses, they drew their swords, and rushed to the succour of their master.

At the same moment, the four conspirators, emerging from their concealment, leaped the wall, and ranged themselves by Brandon's side.

The battle now became fast and furious.

First one side seemed to have the advantage, and then the other.

Sir Hugh Darrell and Brandon seemed equally matched.

One of the conspirators and two of the men from Nottingham were soon *hors de combat*.

The issue of the struggle was even yet doubtful, but the cowardly blow delivered to the governor by Brandon, although failing of the wished-for mark—his heart—had rendered him weak through loss of blood.

At length the young stripling, who until now had kept well out of reach of the blows of the combatants, seized an opportunity, and, sneaking up at the back of Sir Hugh, put the noose of his rope round his neck, and jerked the unfortunate man to the earth.

Brandon thrust his sword, with savage exultation, three or four times into the body of the prostrate man, and speedily put an end to his existence.

The remaining two attendants, seeing their master fall, fled from the scene of carnage, and, vaulting into their saddles, fled at their utmost speed to Nottingham Castle.

The unwounded conspirators then raised the body of the murdered man, and, casting it into the dungeon beneath the tower, rushed in several ways to meet again at their usual rendezvous in the town of Nottingham.

And thus did this unlucky abbey become the scene of a second fearful tragedy.

Meanwhile the attendants dashed off, as we have said, and on reaching Nottingham hurried into the presence of the governor's son.

The latter glanced with dismay at their excited faces, and hastily said:—

"What news?"

"Sir," answered one of the men, in a voice husky with agitation and emotion, "your father, our dear and honoured master, has been foully and cruelly murdered."

"Ha, say you so!" cried Clarence Darrell. "By whom? Speak quickly—keep me not in suspense."

In hurried and faltering accents the men told the tale of horror.

Clarence listened with heaving chest and flashing eyes, and at the conclusion of their narrative he beckoned one of his own private attendants to his side, saying—

"Mervin, come hither; listen, and take my orders."

"Yes, Sir Clarence," answered the man. At the sound of this title Clarence started.

"Why do you call me so?" he exclaimed.

Mervin replied—

"Your poor father, sir, is dead."

"True," answered Sir Clarence; "yet hear

my first command. Let none of my retainers, on pain of my severest displeasure, address me by that title until I have bitterly and fearfully avenged my poor father's murder."

The surrounding attendants bowed low, and promised compliance with his request.

"And now, Mervin," continued Clarence, "to horse at once; spare neither steed nor spur, but take three trusty troopers with you and haste to the camp of the king. Tell him I would myself have brought the news, but that, my father being dead, until I receive farther commands from his majesty, I hold myself responsible for the safety of the town and castle."

On hearing this one of the surrounding retainers started violently.

Then, clutching eagerly the arm of one of his companions, he silently withdrew with him from the chamber to the passage.

When there he whispered in a low, sibilant tone—

"He knows. Haste to the usual rendezvous, the 'Golden Lion,' in the Market-place. Communicate to our companions in the project, or 'twill be too late!'"

His companion ran quickly from the castle, while he returned to the chamber where he had left his master.

Clarence, absorbed in his own sad thoughts, had not observed all this.

Mervin saluted the son of the murdered knight, and asked for further orders.

"Bid the king," rejoined Clarence, "to advance his army nearer to the walls of the town before he gives battle to his opponents, for treachery is evidently afloat."

Mervin, selecting two of his dependents, on whom he knew he could depend, sped on his important errand.

The bereaved young man then sent out another body of selected men to search for the body of his poor lost father.

This party having taken their departure, Clarence sank into his chair and rested his face upon his hands.

He had dearly loved his father, and this blow was almost too heavy for even his brave heart and true spirit to bear calmly.

Mervin and his men sped onward furiously on their mission, and safely arrived at length at the king's camp.

Passing between the lines of tents, and answering the challenges of the numerous sentries, they quickly gained the precincts of the king's pavilion.

An officer here stepped up, and spoke to them, and, hearing the important nature of their business, went at once to seek the presence of his Majesty.

He quickly returned to the place where Mervin and his men were waiting.

He bade Mervin dismount, and led him to deliver his message to King Edward in person.

The king was standing bare-headed, with one hand resting on the table; his head-piece, which consisted of a morion, or steel skull cap, surmounted by the royal crown, was placed near him.

The remainder of his armour was hanging on the walls of the pavilion.

The officer who preceded Mervin said:—

"My liege, the messenger from Nottingham Castle awaits your orders."

"Bid him enter and speak," replied King Edward, eagerly.

Mervin doffed his cap, and, bowing low, stood silently waiting his Majesty's pleasure.

"Come, man, speak!" exclaimed Edward.

"Your news? It must be important, for seemingly you have ridden hard, and the hour of night is scarcely one to be selected for unimportant business."

"My liege," nervously exclaimed Mervin, for he stood in awe of Edward's majestic presence; "my liege, this very night your majesty's governor of Nottingham Castle, Sir Hugh Darrel, has been foully, cruelly entrapped and murdered."

"Ha!" cried the king. "Tell me the details—let me know all."

"My royal master, I know but little of the matter, but what I do I will relate."

"In the evening a man, dressed in a slouched

hat and covering his features with a cloak, was admitted to the presence of Sir Hugh Darrel.

A short time afterwards Sir Hugh, attended by four servitors, mounted and left the castle, guided by this stranger.

"Some two hours after their departure two of the four returned, covered with blood and dust, evidently the result of a severe encounter."

"They entered the chamber of Sir Clarence, almost too agitated to speak."

"But when they had partially recovered their power of speech they gave an account to their young master of the terrible thing that had occurred."

"On that Sir Clarence bade me come and deliver a message to your majesty."

"Ah," said the king, "this savours too much of treachery. But perchance Sir Hugh's death is not so great a loss to the royal cause as at the first blush we might fear. But what message bring you from Sir Clarence?"

"My liege," continued Mervin, "thus he saith—he bade me ask you to advance your army nearer to the walls of Nottingham, as he fears there must be treachery abroad."

The king for a few moments paced to and fro the floor of the pavilion, evidently absorbed in deep thought.

Then, advancing to the table, on which lay several papers and rudely-executed maps, he opened one of the letters, and, beckoning the officer to him, desired him to command the attendance of his majesty's second-in-command in the royal pavilion at the expiration of half an hour.

The officer bowed, turned on his heel, and left on his errand.

The king at once advanced towards Mervin, and bade him carry his message back to Clarence.

"Tell him," he said, clenching his fist, "that there is even more treachery about than he wots of. Until he hears further from us we hold him responsible for the safety and welfare of our loyal subjects of the town of Nottingham."

"Bid him double the sentries at every post, at every gate, at every loophole."

"Let him use the utmost vigilance and care. Should he suspect any one, but even in the slightest degree, of treachery, bid him arrest them, and hold them in safe custody till they can be brought before our royal selves."

"By St. George of England, this outrage shall not go unpunished."

"Traitors and rebels shall be taught that Edward of England brooks no interference with the peace and safety of the realms beneath his sway."

"We will, with our army, be beneath the walls of Nottingham ere we strike a blow at the vile caitiff who dares upraise the standard of rebellion in this country."

"Tell him our opponents' army outnumber ours; and should the fortune of the day seem to be contrary to our hopes, tell him to consider the forces under his command as a reserve for our support, which forces he will use in the way best suited to the purpose."

"Hence now; carry our message quickly. See that all is well and truly attended to, and reward shall flow upon you."

"But if you fail, beware of our severe displeasure."

"Here's guerdon for thy present pains!"

So saying he handed a well-filled purse to Mervin, who left the royal presence, rejoined his companions, and together they sped on their homeward journey.

Mervin had scarcely left the royal tent when the king's second-in-command was announced.

Lord Hubert Cholmondeley entered the presence with a deep bow.

"My lord," said the king, "I have just received intelligence which will oblige us to instantly strike our tents, and march towards Nottingham. Here, on a chart, I will mark the spot where we will give battle to our craven enemy."

"The details we will leave to your care."

"But let the camp be struck at once, and the army be in marching order within two hours."

"Ourselves will lead the van."

Lord Hubert Cholmondeley, without remark, bowed, and left to give the requisite orders.



"YIELD, KING EDWARD!" SHOUTED EDGAR.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE MARCH—THE BATTLE BEFORE NOTTINGHAM. The king, mounted on a splendid charger, led, as he had promised, the van of the army.

During the whole of the march he never deserted this post of honour, and, like a brave commander that he was, shared all the troubles and trials of the meanest of his followers.

It was a bright and glorious morning when the two opposing armies at last sighted each other.

The king's army was encamped on a plain, broad and level, within a short distance from the walls of the town, having the gates in the rear of the main part, to enable Sir Clarence to assist his majesty's attacks with sorties in case of a reverse of fortune.

Almost within bowshot of the advanced outpost might be seen the first sentry of the cordon which surrounded the camp of the multitude of men commanded by Edgar Atheling and his band of rebel nobles.

The sun had not risen very high in the heavens before the trumpets of both armies were heard sounding.

Edgar Atheling, conscious of the superiority in numbers of his men, and relying for support on Sir Hugh Darrell, of whose murder he had not been informed, determined to make the first advance.

Sir Hugh, it is necessary for our readers to know, had some time back entered into a compact with our hero to betray his master the king, and assist him with all his available forces.

On the word of Sir Hugh Edgar of course depended.

That compact had now been severed by death, but this our hero did not know.

The trumpets sounded, and the battle commenced with a discharge of a shower of arrows from the bowmen of Edgar's army.

This was quickly answered by a like volley from the king's archers.

Several fell on both sides.

The king, mounted on his charger and surrounded by the flower of his knights, determined

to put a stop to the murderous attack by a desperate charge.

Himself leading a body of some hundred and fifty knights, dashed wildly across the intervening space to throw himself and hurl destruction on the heads of Edgar's bowmen.

But our hero, seated on his noble horse, was quick to observe the movement, and, followed by a number of his friends, he rushed to meet the assault.

Two bodies of knights met in full career, midway between the two opposing hosts.

And now began a terrific hand-to-hand encounter.

First one party, then the other, seemed to have the better of the fortune of the day.

Lord Hubert Cholmondeley, who was left in command of the main body of the army, dispatched assistance to his majesty.

The same manœuvre was executed by Edgar's lieutenant, and now the battle became general along the entire front of the two bodies.

Several knights were already unhorsed, and were fighting afoot.

Dead and wounded strewed the ground.

Edgar Atheling, step by step, drove the king backwards towards the walls of Nottingham.

"Victory!" cried Edgar, speaking to one of his attendant knights. "The day is ours. See, we drive them back!"

The victory did indeed lie in our hero's hands, and Sir Hugh had but to open the gates to admit our hero's victorious army.

At least so thought Edgar.

Singling out the king, whom he easily distinguished by the crown he wore upon his morion, Edgar fought and cut his way towards him.

The king, easily divining the motive of his attempt, did not seek to avoid the meeting, but himself advanced towards Edgar.

At length their blades were crossed.

"Now, recreant king," cried Edgar, as they met, "I have you in my power."

"Braggart! begone!" shouted Edward. "Base traitor knight, now shalt thou receive the reward of thy villainy! Expect no mercy from my hands, for none will I accord thee, cousin though thou art."

"Mercy from thee I crave not," answered Edgar; "but yield thyself my prisoner."

"Never! base boaster! Do thy work," replied the king, as he aimed a fierce blow at his foe.

The combat was well sustained on both sides. At length the king was unhorsed, and, Edgar leaping from his charger, the conflict was renewed on foot.

Meanwhile a change had come over the battle field.

Sir Clarence Darrell, seeing the king's army retreating before the triumphant host of his youthful opponent, saw that the moment for success had arrived.

He commenced by discharging a shower of arrows from the walls of the town.

Then, ordering the gates to be opened, he and his band of knights poured forth, and quickly advanced to the assistance of his Majesty.

The tide of battle turned.

The reinforcement of Sir Clarence, so unexpected to Edgar and his friends, had the desired effect, and our hero's army was soon in full retreat.

This change had not been noticed by the two combatants.

Edgar had succeeded in fighting the king to his knees.

"Yield, King Edward!" he shouted.

He raised his sword to deal one last blow, that would have caused the monarch to become his prisoner, when a rush of the king's knights carried him from him for an instant.

During that instant the king recovered, and it would have gone hard with our hero, had not the strong arm of his trusty henchman, Ronald McAlpine, at that instant grasped him by the waist.

Ronald had been working well during the fight.

But his huge strength prevented his feeling any fatigue.

With one swing he threw our hero on the back of his charger with as much ease as if he had been a child.

"Fly! my lord," he shouted. "All is lost!"

(To be continued.)

POOR JACK, THE LONDON STREET BOY.

PART II.

CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.

JACK went in without taking the least notice of the people.

He found old Blake in his normal position, bent double almost, cobbling a pair of heavy boots.

clasped in them, and held out his thin hands to receive the boy.

"I am glad you have come in," he said, looking at Jack affectionately.

"What is all the row about?" Jack asked.

"I have no more idea than the dead in the grave, but I am afraid they will commit murder some of these days."

"No fear," said Jack; "there is too much noise to be any danger."

At this point of the conversation Mrs. Blake bounced into the room, red and fuming. She

"What am I to do?" he asked, despairingly.

"If you had the spirit of a man you would stop it."

"If I dared interfere they would tear me to pieces."

"Ugh, you miserable coward! I'll stop it, or I won't stay in a house where these disgraceful scenes go on."

"Some persons are apt to be led away by the force of example," he said, dryly. "Perhaps it would be as well if we did move."

Mrs. Blake looked at him viciously, she felt



IT WAS A MOMENT OF INTENSE EXCITEMENT AND DANGER.

He was nervous and trembling violently; naturally he was a timid little man, and the fearful yelling of the two viragoes and the seven youngsters upset him.

At almost every dig to make a hole for the threads through the thick leather, he drove the point of the awl into his finger, but he went on working.

A look of relief brightened up his pale, careworn face when Jack entered.

He dropped the clams with the heavy boot

flung a big basket she had brought with her across the room, and flopped into a chair like a sack of flour.

"This is a nice scene," she exclaimed, looking at Blake, as if he was the cause of it. "If there is one there is a thousand people around the house."

"It is shocking," remarked the bootmaker, mildly.

"Shocking, indeed," she retorted, sneeringly; "and you sit here quietly, and allow it to go on."

that he was "getting at her," if we may be permitted to use the vulgar phrase, though she did not see the point of his remark.

This roused her ire, and she got up to leave the room.

"Don't you interfere with them, Susan," exclaimed old Blake.

At this juncture cries of "murder" and "police," intermingled with opprobrious epithets, rang through the house in blood-curdling accents that sent a thrill of excitement through the

crowd without, and caused a rush to be made towards the street door.

The voices of the seven offspring intervened in terrified shrieks.

Amidst the shrieking and yelling a scuffle was heard to ensue, and then came the sound of two heavy bodies rolling down stairs.

Jack rushed out to see what had happened and found the two ladies from above strangely mixed up at the foot of the stairs, clawing, biting, and kicking, with an utter disregard to decency.

He was about to undertake the risk of pulling them apart when the street door yielded, and the excited populace swarmed in like an invading army.

Foremost among the invaders were the broker's man and the jobbing gardener.

Either because they were used to such scenes, or the effects of an extra glass at the genial "pub" made them callous, they regarded the contending partners of their sorrows and their joys without evincing any surprise or alarm.

"They're at it again," observed the jobbing gardener.

"I never saw two such devils in all my life," replied the broker's man. "We can't leave 'em alone a hour, without they get tearing one another's eyes out, or nearly killing the kids. What the blazes are you kicking up this row for, you young varmint? If you don't clear off to bed at once I'll flay you alive."

The latter part of his speech was addressed sternly to his progeny, who, grouped on the stairs, were howling like prairie dogs, and shedding buckets of tears.

The gardener's progeny received a similar warning from their paternal relative, and the promising offspring scampered off to their respective quarters.

At the sound of their husband's voices, the amiable ladies went off into mutual hysterics.

"That's their little game, is it?" remarked the jobbing gardener. "Fetch a pail of water, friend Brown; that'll bring 'em round, I know."

"Bleeding's the best cure for stertricks," returned Brown, the broker's man. "Lend me your knife, Watkins, I'll soon open a vein in my old woman's arm."

He received the weapon, a big pruning knife, and made as loud a click as he could by opening it. He "tipped" his friend Watkins a meaning wink, and clutched his wife by the arm. As he did so, her other arm shot up, her hand seized him by the hair, pulled his head down close to her face, and her teeth caught him by the nose.

When her teeth met through the thick end of his nasal organ she released him, and in a voice devoid of hysterics, firm and furious, she exclaimed—

"You cruel monster, you would murder me in cold blood, would you, you drunken savage?"

She wound up by aiming a pugilistic blow at his wind, which he just escaped.

"Whoa, Emma!" he cried, tapping his nose gently with the tips of his fingers; "if you go on like this you will get yourself disliked."

This familiar remark caused a laugh amongst the crowd, who had watched the scene between husband and wife more amused than alarmed.

There being no longer any interest or sympathy manifested for hysterics, the gardener's wife recovered suddenly, and with a bowl of tigerish fury dashed at her lord and master with vengeance gleaming in her eyes of fire.

The gardener was in no mood for a mauling, and skipped behind Jack for protection, from whence he was induced to flee and seek shelter behind broader backs in the crowd by the active pursuit of his better half, who hurled after him the choicest language of a proficient Billingsgate fish-lag.

What the upshot of this playful episode might have been perhaps Watkins masculine could relate of what took place when Watkins feminine got him alone; however, he was saved the disgrace of an *exposé* by a sudden commotion among the crowd without caused by the electrical cry of "Stop thief," and the precipitate intrusion of two strangers.

Jack was nearly knocked down by one as they dashed past him.

The fellows had taken a liberty by entering the house, and he turned to resist it.

They passed him, and made for the back of the house before a hand could be put out to stop them.

Though he caught but a momentary glance of their faces he recognised them both.

One was Flash Harry, a betting-man and sharper, with whom he had come in contact on former occasions; the other Jackson, the bank clerk.

The cry of "Stop thief" resounded from mouth to mouth, and the people, every moment increasing in numbers, crowded into the house with eager excitement.

"Keep out," cried Jack, indignantly. "This is a private house, not a public highway."

"A refuge for thieves, I should say," exclaimed a well-dressed, gentlemanly young fellow, presenting himself before Jack, more excited than the rest of the crowd.

"What do you mean, sir?" our hero demanded, hotly.

"I mean that I have been robbed of twenty pounds by a pair of scoundrels," returned the young stranger, boldly, "and I saw them run into this house."

"Then they have no right here, and have made their way to the back to escape over the wall. Follow me, and we will capture them."

Jack spoke hurriedly, and forgave the young stranger his effrontery, perceiving that he had mistaken his (Jack's) command for the mob to leave the house, as a connivance to shield the thieves.

In a moment it flashed to Jack's mind that this would be a good opportunity to have revenge on Jackson, by affecting his capture. Should he succeed, he thought, as he sped through the house, he would have the satisfaction of proving his enemy a thief, and it might be the means of establishing his own innocence of the robbery at the bank.

This thought incited him to face any danger to capture the villain, and he was a boy not easily daunted.

He reached the backyard in time to see Flash Harry disappear the other side of the wall, which was eight feet high. Another instant, Jackson would have been over too; but, with an elastic spring, our hero reached him, and, seizing him by the leg, which was in the act of drawing up, jerked him to the ground.

"Ah! villain, it is my turn now," said Jack, triumphantly. "So highway robbery is your game, eh? Don't struggle, you won't get away from me."

He did struggle, and desperately too, but Jack held on to him with the tenacity of a panther, and his longing for revenge imbued him with superhuman strength for the time being.

"Fool!" Jackson hissed, with mingled terror and fury. "Let me go, or I will murder you."

By a mighty struggle to break loose he reversed their positions, and got Jack under him; but our hero's grip tightened the more, and it was an utter impossibility for Jackson to escape, despite his threats and violent struggles.

The voices and footsteps of the crowd were heard rapidly approaching. Jackson lost all hope of escape.

Though, in his impotent fury, he could have murdered his bold young captor without remorse, he was, like most men of his treacherous nature, a rank coward at heart, and the thought of being captured sent a thrill through him.

At the critical moment when he gave himself up as lost, and some of the mob were making their appearance in the yard, Flash Harry reappeared on the top of the wall, and tearing a brick away from its fastenings, hurled it with savage force at our hero.

Hurriedly as was the aim, the brick went true to its mark, and struck Poor Jack on the head.

The poor boy, with a groan of pain, relaxed his hold of Jackson, and lay back, robbed of speech and power. In a state of semi-consciousness he saw his cowardly foe scale the wall, pursued by a score of the mob, and their excited cries produced a strange singing noise in his head.

The first person to come to his assistance was

the old bootmaker, who carried him gently into the parlour, and restored him to consciousness by the application of vinegar rags to his forehead.

The brick had done no harm to his head beyond raising a bump the size of a turkey's egg, which he got down by applying a cold iron to it.

In answer to the eager queries of old Blake, Jack related the particulars of his encounter with Jackson in the back yard.

"That same fellow Jackson," he added, "was my fellow clerk, he robbed the bank and accused me of it, as I was unable to prove my innocence, in consequence of the cunning in which he made it appear that I was guilty; and as I was also unable to prove my suspicions that he was the real thief, I got turned out."

Mrs. Blake threw up her hands, and looked at the boy aghast, as if she could scarcely believe what she heard.

"A pretty thing, indeed," she exclaimed; "I suppose we shall have you skulking about here for everlasting. I wonder who you think is going to keep you?"

"I can keep myself, as I have done before," replied Jack.

"But you have proof now that this fellow is a thief," said old Blake, hopefully, "and if you make it known at the bank it will clear you, and perhaps they will take you back."

"Never!" Jack exclaimed, and his face grew red with a flush of pride. "They shall prove my innocence for themselves. I would rather die in a gutter than descend to pleading innocence, or ever set foot in that bank again."

"Then, what do you intend to do, my boy?" Blake asked kindly. "You cannot go back to that wretched life—you are not fitted for it; can't you do something better for yourself?"

"I shall do as I did before," Jack answered, firmly; "buy a broom, take a crossing, and earn an honest penny, and to-morrow morning I shall begin life again as

POOR JACK THE LONDON STREET BOY."

CHAPTER V.

OUT ON THE WORLD AGAIN—JACK SAVES A LIFE—THE LADY AND THE LITTLE GIRL—OLD FOES AND OLD FRIENDS—A LIVELY SCENE.

OUR hero kept his word. The next morning, after a frugal breakfast and a refreshing wash, he started out early to begin again his battle with the world.

In heart and soul he was the same Jack who but a few hours before had been the petted favourite of one of the wealthiest banks in London, but in appearance, as regarded his dress, he was the Poor Jack, the London street boy of old.

He was attired in old ragged garments, which even Mrs. Blake had failed to dispose of at the rag shop, and had left his swell clothes wrapped up with a note pinned to them, informing his foster mother that she was at liberty to pledge them, an offer she was not long in availing herself of when she made the discovery.

Jack took to his old life again as naturally as if he had not left it. The only thing that reminded him of the proud position he had so recently held was seeing other clerks spruce and happy hurrying off to their respective offices, as he had done even up to the morning previous.

The comparison with what he had been and with what he was caused a sign of regret to escape his lips, and he might have been troubled with sad thoughts but that a cheery voice hailed him in the nick of time to drive away dull care.

The owner of the cheery voice was our young friend, Sam, the shoeblack; he ran across the road to greet Jack with as much gladness as though he had not seen him for years at least.

"Hallo, Jack, old pal!" he cried, grasping his hand; "I thought you was run in when I see you copt yesterday, but I'm blooming glad you aint though, no horror."

"I should have been if one fellow had had his way."

"Who's that, Jack? What was it all about?"

You didn't do nothing, did yer?" Sam queried, eagerly.

Jack told him the circumstances in as few words as possible.

"What a blooming sneak; I'd like ter mark him, I should, and I would, too, if I was to come anigh him." And Sam was just the sort of boy who would, in spite of the certainty of getting a licking. "I can't make out them spiteful, jealous sort o' chaps. Why, me and you like to see other people get on, don't we, Jack?"

"Yes, Sam; and take a pleasure in helping others—at least I know you do," said Jack, generously.

"So do you, Jack," said Sam, who would not take any credit to himself which his friend did not share.

"Have you had your breakfast, Jack, old pal?"

"A long time ago."

"Now don't you go to try and kid me, becoss it won't do; you must have had it early, if yer did. What did yer have?"

"Bread and butter and a drink of water."

Well, you'll come and have one with me? I've got enough to pay for the two. Now, no saying no."

"I have money, too, Sam—thank you," said Jack.

"How much?"

"Sixpence. I had a shilling, but I left half of it at home, in case the old people might be short."

"Blowed if you aint the kindest 'an best chap I ever come anigh," said Sam, frankly, and with an admiring look.

"Wouldn't you do the same, Sam?" Jack asked, earnestly.

"Wouldn't I? Rather. And I tell yer what, Jack, I'm a-going to share my money with you, and I aint a-going to take no for a anser; so don't you say I shant."

"But, Sam, I shall be able to earn enough for myself," Jack urged, "and I am sure your mother wants what you have to spare."

"Don't you trouble about my old woman, she's got a good birth and brings home plenty o' prog so we don't starve. Where's yer money coming from?"

"The same way as I got it before. By sweeping a crossing."

"Is that why you're rigged out in them ole togs?" Sam asked. "I s'pose you're a-going to keep the others for Sunday?"

"I expect uncle will keep them for me several Sundays," Jack answered, in a tone of regret.

Sam knew what Jack meant by "uncle keeping them," and he mentally determined to secretly put away a portion of his daily earnings until he had accumulated enough to redeem his friend's best suit of clothes—the amount for which they were pledged he was certain to get at.

"Come on, Jack," he said, keeping his generous intention to himself. "Let us toddle into a coffee-shop and have a tuck out."

Jack complied, and Sam stood a breakfast of bacon and eggs, which fortified them for the best part of the day against the pangs of hunger.

The next thing was to furnish Jack with a birch broom, which they purchased at an oil-shop, and paid fourpence for it, being of a superior quality to those used by ordinary crossing sweepers.

They then made their way to the W.C. district, and took up their positions in a busy thoroughfare.

"I don't think we shall do much," said Sam, "it's too dry and fine for this lay."

"If this don't pay I shall try something else that will."

"What?" Sam queried.

"Carry parcels, hold horses, and any odd job, Sam."

"There aint many o' them knocking about now, Jack," said Sam, almost dolefully; "them blooming commissioners have took all them jobs out of our hands, and there aint much chance for a poor beggar picking up a honest penny, less he knows his blooming way about."

"I know my way about pretty well, Sam," said Jack, as if it was something to be proud of,

"and I don't mean to starve in the streets of London while I have got the use of my hands and feet."

"Right yer are, Jack, and you shan't starve while I've got a blooming copper to spend. Now, then, slog into yer crossing, ole son, an' see if yer can't touch the 'arts o' the old ladies."

The roads were so dry and clean that Poor Jack was unable to make a distinguishable crossing, but his handsome face and obliging manners did more to bring in the coppers than his labours for the comfort of the public as a crossing-sweeper.

He would stop horses with the authority of a constable, to allow women to cross the road; he would kindly guide the poor blind from one side to the other; safely conduct the aged and infirm to steer clear of the crush of vehicles; and he was particularly attentive to children, whom he took across the road one at a time, whenever he saw their nurses or mothers getting bewildered.

All this, of course, tended towards lining his pocket, and he did much better than he anticipated.

In spite of his rags he was clean and wholesome-looking, and respectable people were not afraid of coming in contact with him, as they are with most persons of his calling, who make the mistake of keeping themselves dirty, untidy, and dejected-looking, to elicit sympathy.

Jack had just conducted a couple of children across the road when a frantic shouting arose that spoke of some one in danger.

Turning sharply to ascertain the cause of the alarming cries, he saw a gentleman struck by the shaft of a hansom cab and hurled on his back, almost under the horse's feet.

Without a moment's delay Jack sprang forward and seized the horse by the bridle.

"Stop," he shouted, excitedly; "you'll run over the man!"

"Let go o' the boss," cried the driver, and, leaning forward over his cab, he made a cut at the boy with his whip.

"Help! help!" cried Jack, wrestling with the affrighted horse.

His cries were responded to by the appearance of Sam, who, with blacking box slung across his back, made for the cabman.

It was a moment of intense excitement and danger.

People looked on, too awe-stricken to move.

The gentleman who had been knocked down lay close under the wheels of the cab, conscious of his peril but too powerless to move.

The horse, frightened by the frantic yelling of the people and the lashing of the whip, reared up on its hind legs, plunging about madly. Had the cab swerved to one side the old gentleman must have been crushed under the wheels.

Jack saw this, and, with the strength of a giant—a strength derived from desperation—he endeavoured to turn the wild animal in the other direction.

While Jack was struggling bravely with the plunging horse to save life the driver lashed at him savagely, and Sam, burning with indignation, clambered up the back of the cab to avenge his companion.

"Let the boss alone," raved the infuriated cabby, making the thong of his whip curl round our hero's form; "let go, I say, or I'll cut you to pieces!"

"You can cut," replied Jack, firmly, "but you shall not escape if I can help it."

Sam got a footing on the cab spring, and, hanging on to a rail of the driver's perch, he took a brush from his box, and gave the man a blow with it between the shoulders.

"Take that," he cried, dealing him a second and third blow. "Yer aint a goin' ter knock my pal about."

The man turned on him savagely, but Sam avoided his big fist, and seized hold of his collar.

He would have dragged the driver out of his seat into the road on his head, but at this critical moment he was wrenched down by a policeman, who gave him a shake, and peremptorily told him to move on.

Other hands now helped Jack in checking the desperate plunging of the horse, and the old

gentleman was taken out of danger, terribly shaken by his fall.

"What yer doing of?" demanded Sam, turning cheekily upon the constable. "I aint done nutthink."

The constable was busy making a note of the cabman's number and badge, but he turned indignantly upon the bold speaker, and, with a warning look, said—

"If you don't clear out of this, I'll move yer; I don't want any of your saunce. Now be off."

He gave Sam a violent push, but the boy stood his ground doggedly.

"That's gratitood," he remarked, turning to the crowd that had collected round the cab; "the blooming cabby knocks down a ole gent, an' is a going to drive over him to make his 'scape, when me an' my pal stops him, an' we gets rounded on for saving a life by a bobby."

The remarks that Sam's speech brought forth from a few sympathisers were not flattering to the "bobby."

His head was compared to an empty egg-shell, his intelligence less than a fool's, and other derogatory personalities were given breath to, which he had to swallow, and dared not resent.

"Are you going to let that man go?" asked a bystander.

"Is that your business?" returned the constable, "I've got his number; and know where to find him if he is wanted."

"I call it disgraceful; he should be locked up and punished. It would be a lesson to others to drive with more care. This fellow may be the cause of injury for life to the gentleman he knocked down by his recklessness."

Others now took sides with the speaker, and it began to look queer for the cabby.

He got in an awful state of funk, and, mounting his perch, he gathered up the reins to drive off, but the men who had helped Poor Jack to hold the horse would not let him go.

This exasperated the cabby, and he lashed them in sheer desperation. It was one of the worst things he could have done.

The people, already malignant with him, became furious, and hauled him bodily out of his seat into the road. They would have taken the law into their own hands, and lynched him, but for the arrival of a couple more policemen, who interposed on his behalf.

"What is all this about?" asked a sergeant of police, who was one of the two just arrived.

"Why," said Poor Jack, smarting from the lashes, "this cabman knocked a gentleman down, and would have driven over him if I had not stopped his horse; and then he lashed me for interfering."

An angry murmur arose, and the crowd, with threatening looks, closed round the offender.

The gentleman, supported between two strong men, now came forward, and, being asked if he wished to charge the cabman, answered—

"If you know where to find him you can let him go, though it was through his own carelessness that he knocked me down. Ah!" he added, pointing to Jack, "that is the noble boy who saved my life. Come here; I must know to whom I owe this great debt of gratitude, and reward you."

(To be continued.)

WILL THE DIVER;

OR,

THE SECRET OF THE WRECK.

CHAPTER XXVI.—CONTINUED.

"WILL WENTWORTH," said Nelson Argray, "you may think it strange, but there is a fatality resting upon us both that will bring one or both of us to the grave. You, I thought, would have found a resting-place in Constantinople, and this girl and tigress, I thought, would have served me as a wife."

"Villain!" cried Will, his clear eye flashing; "can you speak such blasphemy in the presence of your wounded bro—"

"Wounded!" cried Ziola, interrupting him. "He is dead, he has murdered him."

Will stood aghast.

"Murdered!" he echoed, and then he saw the red patch growing larger and larger on the side of the snowy canvas of the cot until it fell with a dripping sound upon the deck.

"Good heavens!" he said; "can such devils live to glory in their sin? Why is not the hand of him who raises a weapon against his brother palsied before it can strike?"

Nelson Argray's eyes shone like burning coals.

They fairly blazed.

"Fool!" he hissed; "I will add another to the list if you haunt me."

Even as he spoke, he raised the blood-stained knife, and would have plunged it into Will's bosom, had not our hero detected his treacherous movement, and, with a well-stricken blow, caused him to slip on the gory deck, and fall back, striking his head against one of the lockers.

No sooner had he fallen than our hero was upon him; but, seeing that he was stunned, he merely tore down the silken cords used to draw the arras, and bound his feet firmly to a ring-bolt in the deck.

Then our hero looked around him, and was for some moments lost in deep thought. Visions of the past flitted like magic through his brain.

In fancy he saw over again the wreck of the "Minnie Clyde," the dark deeds pertaining thereto; the mirror on the dead man's breast; the secret missive; and, above all, Caroline Harley.

Then he reflected upon the treachery of Nelson Argray, the position he was now in, and last, but not least, the great responsibility resting upon him for the safety of Ziola.

She was standing back within the arras of the state cabin just then, gazing on our hero with her mild, beaming eyes, resting against the magnificent crimson cushions of an ottoman; one finger on her ruby lips, and her delicate little feet crossing each other.

Will started when he recovered from his lethargy, and beheld her gazing upon him. But, quickly recovering himself, he examined the occupant of the cot and found he was dead.

"Ziola," then said our hero, "we must get rid of this ghastly corpse. The ruffians forward have already planned a mutiny, thinking I have no right to take charge of the ship, and if they discover that the captain is dead they will rebel at once."

"What do you propose doing then?" asked the lovely Franco-Greek girl, looking trustfully towards him.

"I will show you if you will assist."

Will then took two solid shots from one of the lockers, and, placing them at the dead man's feet, lashed the body in the cot, and, aided by Ziola, he lowered the whole through the cabin window into the sea.

It was a painful and solemn task, but it was a relief when it was done.

Will then threw cold water over the swooning Argray, and endeavoured to restore him.

Our hero wanted to know what had become of his yacht, and how Nelson Argray became acquainted with the pirates.

When he recovered sufficiently he told Will.

The day previous to that on which the "Kitty Fawn" was boarded by the pirates, Nelson Argray's yacht was sunk by the same infamous crew, taking down with her the precious opal, for possession of which Nelson Argray had imbrued his hands in the blood of the pasha, and almost sacrificed the life of Will Wentworth.

Every one of the yacht's crew sank with her, but Nelson Argray rose to the surface and was taken on board the pirate polacca.

"But it was not out of any kind motive," said the fast-dying man; "knowing their language, I heard them plan to take me to Algiers and sell me into slavery."

"Good God!" gasped Will; "the wretches!" and then he noticed the death pallor creeping over Argray's brow.

"Argray," he said, stooping down over the prone figure and loosening his bonds, "you are dying fast—you must feel it. Have you anything to say as an atonement for the injury you have done me, and the evil deeds you have been guilty of?"

"Nothing," replied Nelson Argray, faintly. "The opal is gone, my men are all gone, and my brother I cannot see—my eyes grow misty; but that diamond ring on your finger shoots like a meteor into my brain. Through the covering I can see you have put over it to conceal it from the crew, it blazes in my eyes and makes all else appear void."

"Keep it for her; give it to her. She was the only girl I ever truly loved—Caroline Harley—Caroline Harley!"

Nelson Argray spoke no more when Will recovered from the impressiveness of the scene. He was in the presence of the dead.

Ziola fell on her knees and prayed for the souls of the departed; for, though a woman whom in some circles would be looked upon with scorn, she had a sensitive heart, and more devoutness about her than many who profess themselves Christians.

Will then, aided as before by Ziola, consigned the second brother to the deep, no one but the pair being cognisant of the silent burials.

A kind word to Ziola, and then Will went on deck to cool his brow with the fresh breeze that had sprung up, and was bearing the "Kitty Fawn" bravely shorewards.

O'Brien was still at the helm; he had made so many voyages to the smugglers' haunt that he could find his way through the intricate passages leading to it, as well as Jack Argray himself.

He, therefore, found no difficulty in guiding the schooner into the bay behind the bold headland, so that the anchor was soon dropped and the boats hoisted out ready to land the cargo.

Will's difficulty was great now.

As we have said, none but himself and Ziola knew of the captain's death and burial.

To a question of O'Brien, he replied that the captain was in his berth unable to be removed.

Will did not like the ominous looks cast at him by the smugglers as they worked, nor the dark scowling brows of the smugglers who boarded them from the shore.

Whether to land or not he was at first undecided, but at length he considered it best to do so, and to take Ziola with him.

Both secretly well armed then entered the first boat-load of treasure which was the most precious of that valuable cargo, and the boat was rowed to land, which was not very far distant.

Will all this time had been wondering how it was that he saw no one about the rocks that lined the little inland bay, but he soon found out the reason when the boat, taking a sudden turn, shot under an arch formed by nature in the beetling cliff.

Six brawny, black-bearded fellows, who had put off from the shore, manned the boat, leaving their own boat alongside the schooner to be loaded, and when they had proceeded a little way the smuggler, who sat in the stern steering, ordered the one in the bow, who was ready with a boat-hook to push off from the side if the boat attempted to touch, to light a torch.

As the flame from the tarry flambeaux shot up and lit the cavernous passage, Will was surprised at the rugged and jagged aspect of the sides.

For a long while they proceeded in silence, and then a sharp turn brought them in sight of a level platform of rock which led to the floor of an immense cave lit up with oil lamps.

Grouped in the centre were half a dozen rough looking fellows and in their midst a grey-bearded man with a fez cap, high boots, a blue corsair jacket, and a sort of petticoat reaching almost to his knees.

As the boat approached he stepped forward and gazed with an anxious look at the occupants.

"Hallo! Where is Captain Argray?" he shouted.

"On board," was Will's prompt answer; and then, stepping on to the platform, he informed the chief, as he appeared to be by the deference paid him by the rest, of their encounter with the pirates, saying nothing of the death of Jack Argray.

Turning suddenly, Will missed Ziola from his side, and presently he observed her some paces away, gazing earnestly at one of the smugglers.

Raising his head, the smuggler caught her eye, and then, with an impulsive start, they rushed into each other's arms.

"Brother!" "Sister!" were the words that burst simultaneously from each, and Will became aware at once that Ziola and her brother were met.

Will found very good company in the old chief, but he was rather disgusted with some of their ways—so much so that he was determined to quit them as soon as possible.

Now Ziola had found her kinsman, she would be no further obstacle to him, so when the boat was unloaded, Will bid Ziola adieu, and returned again to the schooner.

To his surprise, he found her with her sails hoisted and her anchor hove short, ready for getting under weigh—a dozen loaded pistols being presented to him when he attempted to board.

The truth flashed to him at once. The smugglers had discovered the absence of the captain, and mutinied.

A boat half loaded with precious contraband was fast alongside the schooner; this he cut adrift, and, being determined he would not lose all his spoil, he drew his pistols, which were concealed, as we have before observed, and compelled one of the smuggling boat's crew to step into the boat with him.

Then the "Kitty Fawn" sailed away with a spanking breeze; the other boat put back to the cave with the news, and our hero, with his solitary companion, were left alone.

For three days, under a broiling hot sun, without food and only an occasional shower of rain at night to moisten their parched skin, the solitary voyagers were tossed about in the open sea, praying each moment that a sail might be seen in sight, but no help came.

* * * * *

"Where am I now?"

"In England," answered a bluff old seaman; "don't you know me, Will Wentworth? I am old Captain Stokes."

Will sat up in the bed, and gazed vacantly at the old salt. "The packet I gave you?" he gasped, hoarsely.

"It is here. That villain, Gordon Roy, nearly murdered me for it; he in fact thought he got it. But an old salt, be he never so honest, can sail under false colours when it is needed."

"And where are Caroline Harley and her brother Lionel?"

"Safe; they are beneath this very roof," and then the old captain acquainted the invalid, for Will had been suffering from a delirious fever, from the time Captain Stokes picked him up in the open boat.

Then he left the room for a few minutes, and returned with Lionel Harley, Caroline, and a grey-headed old gentleman, leaning on a stick.

The latter was no other than Mr. Wentworth, Will's father, who had been summoned by the kind-hearted Captain Stokes, who, having recovered from the murderous assault made upon him by Gordon Roy and his hirelings, placed the two orphans in a place of security, and then, impelled by a secret power which seemed to whisper that he would one day fall in with the missing youth, he took ship and sailed again to sea.

The emotion of Mr. Wentworth on beholding his lost son was painful to behold. A scene over which we would rather draw a veil ensued, but there was this cheering result, that the virtuous triumphed.

As Will grew stronger day by day, he put together the threads connected with the SECRET OF THE WRECK, and, under the skilful manipulation of two clever lawyers from London, the villainy of Gordon Roy was so fully established, and Lionel's claim to his parents' estate made so clear, that Lionel was soon placed in full possession of them, and Gordon Roy was sent to Portland for a number of years.

Captain Stokes then settled down in his old quarters; Will got married to Caroline Harley; and old Mr. Wentworth lived with them, and often enjoyed WILL THE DIVER'S story of THE SECRET OF THE WRECK.

THE END.



"HUSH!" CRIED ENGLISH SPRAY; "WE NEED NOT THE INTERFERENCE OF WOMEN."

PAUL JONES; OR, THE ROVER'S LOVE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENGLISH SPRAY DISPLAYS HIS GALLANTRY.

THE darkness was almost ink-like in its intensity, but the eagle eye of English Spray quickly took in the outlines of their assailants.

No sooner had he fired his pistol and shot one of his assailants down, than he hurled his pistol, with the strength of a young Hercules, into the face of one who held his musket at full cock ready to fire.

With a groan the ruffian fell back, his face horribly cut and distorted; and then English Spray had but one foe to contend against.

He was a tall, herculean, black-bearded ruffian, something between the corsair and the bandit; a fellow who looked as if he would stay at nothing, void of all scruples, shorn of all humanity; in fact, the very ideal of the midnight bravo and assassin.

It was only for a moment that the gallant young English Spray gazed at him through the gathering gloom.

One star like a meteor shone out and fell upon his swarthy face.

He was about to clasp his long, serpent-like fingers on the fair, white throat of our hero, but English Spray held him back.

"Viper!" he hissed, "you know not with whom you have to deal. For this night's treacherous work you shall dearly pay."

"Whuff!" growled the desperado—the word coming from his throat like the steam from a pipe. "Whuff!" and he raised his weapon to fire.

But English Spray, not deeming it prudent to empty his remaining pistol, took one from the

belt of his fallen chief, and shot the fellow through the head.

"Two out of three—that is not so bad," said the youth to himself.

Then he bestowed a moment upon his stunned chief.

He knew that he was not dead.

He could feel his heart palpitate.

Placing his ear to his lips, he could hear him breathe.

"Water—water," he thought, "but where can I procure it?"

In the dark stillness he fancied he could hear the murmur of a rill.

Time was precious now, and he wasted not one idle moment in thought.

Feeling with his hand, he caught hold of a large tuft of grass, and, pulling it up, he placed it beneath his chieftain's head.

Then, guided by the sound, he sought the stream that was bubbling from a rock, and, filling the tuscan hat Paul Jones had worn in his disguise, he quickly returned to the sufferer.

We have used the word sufferer, for although Paul Jones was lying to all appearance stunned, he was only paralysed to a certain extent, and was perfectly conscious of all that was passing, though he could neither move nor speak.

English Spray knelt down beside him.

He splashed a few drops of water on his almost insensible face.

"Captain, captain—Paul Jones!" he implored, "for heaven's sake, and for hers too, who is now anxiously waiting on board our ship for your return, speak to me."

Paul Jones answered with a moan.

The renowned pirate, so terrible to his foes when in health, was now as feeble as a child.

He groaned again, this time more audibly.

"Where are you?" he at length spoke feebly.

"Here."

"Where? Reach me your hand."

"I am here beside you—English Spray. Rouse up, captain; the Philistines have been, and more may shortly be, down upon us."

Paul Jones started.

"Drink—drink, I am gasping," he gulped forth.

English Spray held the water to his lips, and he drank.

This revived him.

The cool draught seemed to infuse fresh vigour through his frame.

After a few moments he was enabled to sit up.

"Spray," he murmured, "I have a flask of brandy in my pouch; give me a drop, I implore you."

He spoke with difficulty, and showed signs of a relapse.

English Spray searched for the flask at once and soon found it.

Then he placed it to the lips of his chief, and gave him a good draught.

Jones seemed to recover wonderfully.

He even recovered his speech.

"They have hurt my head," he said, "and my right arm is stiff and immovable."

"I hope not," said English Spray, earnestly.

His keen eye had detected a movement of the man in whose face he had hurled the pistol.

Quick as lightning, he was on his feet, and beside the prostrate foe.

The ruffian groaned, and seemed to be in acute agony.

The heart of English Spray relented.

He was thorough English, and he gloried not in the sufferings of a fallen foe, but his young heart prompted him at once to aid him.

Consulting only his own feelings, instead of seeking the advice of his chief, the young seaman poured water upon his bleeding brow, and administered to him a drop of brandy.

"Gracia, gracia!" murmured the man, who, by his speech, was an Italian; "Ingleterra good—bono—bono—"

The pale moon was just rising above the hills, and cast its beams fitfully upon the pallid features of the speaker.

English Spray knelt down, and gazed into his dark, piercing eyes.

"If Englishmen are good," said he, "why do you act the bravo—the assassin? Are you a Venetian?"

The man winced.

"Si, si" (meaning "Yes, yes"), he answered, after a pause.

"Then I pity you," said our young hero. "Do you know whom you have waylaid this night?"

"Too well," answered the desperado, speaking in broken English; "but—"

He paused.

"You were paid to do it?"

"Exactly so."

"And you have failed?"

"Worse luck, I have."

"And what have you lost?"

"My share of the bribe, and—but there you are too generous to deprive a poor miserable mortal of his life."

"I am not so sure of that," replied English Spray, boldly; "a life for a life is the law in my country."

"But I have killed no one," pleaded the ruffian, cringing.

"It is not your fault that you have not put an end to my brave commander, Paul Jones," answered English Spray, his proud spirit rising; "and I see no just cause why I should show you mercy."

The man winced more than ever.

It was evident he was smarting acutely under his wounds, independent of the sharp thrusts that the stinging rebuke of English Spray brought home to him.

CHAPTER XV.

IGNATO'S DOOM.

HAD English Spray been like some impetuous young fellows, he would have thrust his dirk to the heart of his dastardly foe; but, being true English-born, as we have said and as his name implies, he revolted at the bare idea of so foul a deed.

"I will spare you," he said, "if it is only to repent of the black deeds you have committed; but," and he drew his proud form erect—"but," he reiterated, "I shall not let you go scot free."

"Oh spare me!" cried the growling wretch.

"I will, simply to denounce the black-hearted villain who employed you."

"Hush!" gasped the bandit, in horrified tones.

"For why?"

"He may hear you."

"Whom?"

"My employer."

"Is he here, then?"

"He may be."

"Your speech is a riddle. Speak out."

"Hush!"

"Speak out."

"He may be here."

"Then I would see him," said English Spray.

"You must not."

"Ah! Why?"

"You cannot."

"That remains to be proved. You say he may be here. If he comes I will see him."

"Then both of us are lost."

"Why so?"

"Because he is powerful, rich, strong; he can crush us both, and your mas—"

"My captain. My chief, you mean. English Spray has no master, owns no commander but him he chooses to serve. English Spray is not a serf, the hireling of one who would be, but is too cowardly to be, an assassin."

The ruffian sank back to the earth, overpowered but not abashed, at the words English Spray had spoken. Loss of blood, and an uncertainty of what his future fate might be, made him almost swoon.

As English Spray stood regarding his hideous,

blood-stained features by the light of the pale moon, a shrill but low whistle startled him.

English Spray raised his eyes.

He gazed in the direction of the sound.

He saw distinctly a tall, dark figure crouching and creeping along under shadow of a tall overhanging rock.

Pulling the sash from his waist, for English Spray, like Paul Jones, was disguised in the costume of the country, the brave boy bound the ruffian hand and foot.

Making a jamming hitch round his two wrists, he brought them down as far as he could, and fastened them to the miscreant's ankles.

Having thus rendered the ruffian powerless, English Spray then went forward to meet the new comer, who was bent on no peaceful errand, as his sly, serpent-like movements denoted.

Ensconcing himself in the crevice of a rock where he could see without being seen, our hero anxiously awaited the approach of the dark figure, from the outline of whose build he could see that he would have a formidable foe to contend with.

Summoning all his courage, and stringing his sinewy muscles for the contest, English Spray waited until the figure was near enough for him to spring upon, and then, with the bound of a tiger, he leapt upon the back of a man whose neck and arms to the shoulder were bare.

A savage growl escaped the man when he found himself pinned by our hero, who drew his dirk and pressed the sharp point of the cold steel to the nape of his neck just above the vertebrae.

"Stay, villain, move not!" hissed our hero in his ear, as he forced his victim to his knees. "Remain quiet, and you are safe—resist, and you shall die."

He forced the point of his dirk through the man's skin to enforce his command.

Ignorant of the class of character he had to deal with, and an inward misgiving of something having gone wrong, the man, to the astonishment of English Spray, knelt quietly and begged for his life.

"I shall fulfil my promises," said English Spray, firmly. "Pull your sword from its sheath, and throw it from you."

The man hesitated, but our hero pressed the dagger a small way into his flesh; then, with a sharp cry, the man drew his sword and flung it away.

He was at our hero's mercy.

English Spray, as it will be remembered, still possessed one loaded pistol.

This he drew, and, leaping from the man's back, he with dagger and pistol confronted him.

"Now," he said, "you must answer my question—for what purpose are you here to-night?"

"Must I answer?"

"Your refusal will be your death."

"I am on a journey."

"Whither, and for what purpose?"

"To meet—"

The man faltered.

"You are deceiving me," cried English Spray, not giving him time to recover himself and hatch up a tale; "you came to capture Captain Paul Jones."

The man started.

"What makes you think so?" he asked.

"I know it. You have been betrayed by the three emissaries employed by your master—is it not so?"

The man's subtle face grew paler in the moonlight.

"If you know all, why ask me?" he said, speaking with great emphasis.

"Because between two liars one is apt to get at the truth. Say, have I not judged rightly—are you not here to assist in taking Paul Jones prisoner?"

"Since you will have it so," was the reply, "I must confess. Even now my employer, Lanarca, is waiting at the mouth of the pass."

"Come, then, you are my prisoner," vociferated English Spray, putting all the fierceness in his voice he was capable of; "I will show you Paul Jones, and the accomplices whom you seek."

The man shrank back in abject terror when our hero led him round a point of rock and

showed him the upturned faces of the dead, lit up by the shimmering gleam of the moon.

Scarcely daring to take his eyes off the prisoner, English Spray cast a glance at his bound captive, and noticed a piece of folded parchment protruding from his breast.

To the joy of the youth, Paul Jones at that moment appeared. He had bathed his bruised head at the spring, and now stood with his wounded arm hanging listless by his side.

The boy's brow flushed with anger when he saw the prostrate condition of his chief.

"I have a mind to settle this account with the pair of you at once," he said, fiercely.

"Hold thine hand—spare them," interposed Paul Jones; "there is another one to be punished."

English Spray now found liberty to stoop down.

Snatching the parchment from the pocket of the bound ruffian, he unfolded it and handed it to his chief.

Paul Jones held the missive up to the light of the moon and scanned it over.

Then he read aloud, although it was written in Italian, with which he was perfectly conversant.

For the benefit of our readers we translate it into English. It ran thus:—

I, Lorenzo, do promise to give you five hundred gold pieces if you capture the redoubtable pirate, Paul Jones, alive or dead, and his young confederate, known as English Spray, and deliver them both into my hands, for what further purpose I choose. They will pass through the gorge to-night. I will meet you at midnight at the mouth of the Black Valley, and my attendant will receive the prisoners from your hands. If you succeed you will get your reward. If you fail dread the swift, sure, and deadly vengeance of—

LORENZO.

There was a deep silence while this was being read, and when Paul ceased there was a general drawing of breaths.

"What think you of this?" said the pirate chief, in a stentorian voice. "What is your opinion of Lorenzo when he sends such goodly company to meet his friends—one who has stood by him in his trouble, protected his ships at sea, sold him many a cheap cargo, and even within the last few hours given him an order that would have put gold in his purse?"

There was a deep pause.

Then Paul Jones resumed:

"Listen to me, you who have, through the sparing hand of my young companion, been left the sense of hearing—one hour from this I could have you taken on board my ship and strung up to the yard-arm, or blown from the muzzle of a gun."

The ruffian shivered, and the one on the ground began to wriggle about most uncomfortably.

"Will you," Paul Jones went on, "aid me in capturing this treacherous Lorenzo, and unfold to me the particulars of the plot?"

English Spray loosened the bonds of the man on the ground, so that he might the better hear and speak. Then he disclosed the plot, the very rehearsal of which was enough to make one's blood to run cold.

To repeat every word that passed, and the feelings wrought upon each individual one, would take up too much time; let it suffice that Paul by his frank manner soon won the men who had been incited to raise their hands against him, to his side, and made them swear upon the cross of his dagger hilt to be faithful to him.

It was nearly an hour later that the party of four, consisting of Paul Jones, English Spray, the bandit Andrea, and the last comer, Goldup, reached the mouth of the black valley, where Goldup had left Lorenzo and his escort to go and reconnoitre.

Lorenzo was still there, seated on a white palfrey, in one of those huge saddles formerly used by the knights of old Spain.

The old Spaniard, for Spain was reported to be his birthplace, though he had been many years in Naples, and had carried on all sorts of nefarious trading under the guise of a merchant, had disguised himself in a long black gown that reached to his feet, whilst a hooded cowl

covered his head, giving him the appearance, to any casual observer, of a priest.

Paul's keen eye quickly recognised him in spite of his disguise.

Halting in the shade, he ordered Goldup to go forward, and report that all was right.

Lorenzo rubbed his hands in glee as he listened to the tale fabricated by the swarthy minion.

"Do they bring them this way?" he inquired, in a tone quite loud enough for our hero Paul to hear.

"Si, senor," was the reply; "they will be here in less than ten minutes."

"But Paul Jones—you are sure they have him?" he asked, earnestly.

"They have; you will see him soon."

The eyes of the treacherous old villain sparkled again.

"I will have the reward," he uttered unconsciously, aloud; "the reward of the Neapolitan government and the ten thousand pounds offered by the English."

"And what of my reward?" asked Goldup, interrupting him.

Lorenzo was struck with his boldness.

He was used to have those in his employ crawl and cringe to him.

Fortunately for Goldup, he attributed it to the man's success, or he would have sent a bullet through his brains without any scruple.

Paul Jones grew tired of this farce. He could see by Lorenzo's manner that he had no intention to part; the old man was too fond of his gold to part with it easily.

Paul Jones noted also that the old Spaniard kept constantly glancing aside, as if he had some one there in reserve, in case of accident.

At this juncture Paul Jones stepped forth and confronted the astounded bandit; at the same instant English Spray seized the reins of the palfrey.

Lorenzo was so astounded that he could not speak.

He was unable even to give the signal that would have brought assistance to his side.

Before a word could be uttered Paul signalled to Goldup to drag him from his horse, and bind and gag him with the ropes he carried at his saddle bow, which were intended for the securing of Paul and English Spray.

The fellow performed the work easily and deftly, for which Paul gave him great credit; and then, calling to the bandit, he ordered him to assist in lifting the old rascal into his seat again.

English Spray, with a forethought peculiar to him, had already loaded the empty pistols.

Paul Jones took one in his uninjured hand, and fired point blank into the dark rocky recess, where he anticipated the ambush was concealed.

A loud cry answered the echo of the shot, and presently three as villainous-looking personages as anyone would wish to look upon darted into the moonlight, using such epithets as are not worth repeating.

Paul Jones shouted to them to surrender, and they, not comprehending the actual state of affairs, quickly did so, piling their arms as he directed, and walking fifty paces away from them.

Of these English Spray quickly took charge, commanding Goldup to carry them; and then, having found the wounded man, who was bit in the leg, they bound up his wound, and, after disarming him, allowed him to hobble away as best he could.

Then Paul marshalled his force, and, placing the four prisoners, with the horse, in front, Goldup and the bandit next, Paul Jones and English Spray bringing up the rear, the pirate chief ordered the cavalcade to move forward in the direction he indicated.

CHAPTER XVI.

LORENZO—THE TRAITOR'S DOOM.

It was a long march over the broken ground, but it was accomplished, and the three prisoners were astounded when they found themselves in front of the very cave they had started from many hours before.

The fierce scowls and angry glances the three prisoners cast on Goldup and the bandit, bore

evidence of the treatment they might expect if the prisoners were only free.

Paul Jones, leaving the prisoners under charge of English Spray and the other two, explored the interior of the cave, where they found two women, and chains, &c., that were used in the banditti's nefarious calling.

As Paul entered the apartment in which the women were reposing on luxuriant couches, they rose, expecting one of their husbands had returned; but they gave a shriek of terror when they saw the face of a stranger, and that he was armed.

"Fear not," cried the pirate, observing their agonised looks, for, by the strange perception so peculiar to their sex, they guessed that the band had been overpowered, and that they were at the mercy of the victors, "I shall not harm you, but I have taken possession of this place for a time and all the treasure therein."

"Mercy—mercy!" shrieked the women, their beauteous dark eyes filling with tears, and their lovely tresses falling in careless profusion over their shoulders; "we have done no harm, and we are poor—very poor."

"I have spoken, and that is enough," replied the pirate, with a sternness he did not feel, for the sight of those beautiful, pleading females quite unnerved him.

Collecting an armful of chains, he returned to the outer cave and manacled the three prisoners, whom he placed in a sort of cell formed in the solid rock.

Then he turned his attention to Lorenzo, whose hands were pinioned behind him, and who was allowed to be seated on a stone.

On account of the oath taken by Goldup and the bandit, and the reward Paul had promised them, the pirate chief had no doubts about their proving true to him; at the same time he was prepared for any little accident that might occur.

The bandit he had sent with a message to the boat, to allay their fears for Paul's extraordinarily long absence, and Goldup he had deputed to inflict such punishment upon Lorenzo as he might be sentenced to.

Paul's arm, however, was growing exceedingly painful; he was obliged to throw off the tight-fitting jacket he wore, and throw a loose blue cloak around his shoulders.

He had scarcely done so when the women, in a state bordering on distraction, rushed into what was now the trial chamber.

When they beheld Lorenzo—his white beard streaming down to his waist, his arms pinioned, and the tall form of Goldup standing like an executioner behind the stone bench on which the old man was seated—they uttered a wail that echoed through the cave, and seemed to rend the silvery canopy of the heavens above.

"Oh, spare him—spare him, senor!" they both pleaded, in all the eloquence of their native language; "what has he done, of what crime do you accuse him that you thus insult his grey hairs?"

"Do you know him, then?" asked Paul Jones.

"Yes, were it not for him we would starve, it is he who giveth employment to our husbands; it is he who findeth bread for our little ones, whom we have concealed within, for fear they might come to harm."

Paul was quite softened by this appeal.

The lustrous eyes gazing into his melted his harshness and awoke all the better feeling within him.

English Spray noticed this, but he was determined that justice should be done, and that the dastardly and murderous attempt upon the life of his gallant captain should not go unpunished.

He had one of the women kneeling at his feet, and at times clinging frantically to his knees, but he pressed her back gently and tried to shut his ears to her agonising pleadings.

"Hush!" cried English Spray, pointing to the traitor; "we need not the interference of women. It is our solemn and bounden duty to try this hoary-headed villain and to pass upon him the sentence of death, or any other punishment that may be suitable to his crimes."

(To be continued.)

THE BLUE JACKETS OF OLD ENGLAND;

Or, The Flag That's Braved a Thousand Years.

CHAPTER XLII.—CONTINUED.

THE father of Jamrac made as if he would tear his beard, but didn't. He took off his turban instead, and dashed it on the ground, leaving his egg-like head exposed to view.

"By the graves of my forefathers," he said, "I will have lives for this!"

"Old man," said Lona, again, "away!"

"Better come," urged Jamrac; "you can't help yourself. She's turned you up. Go home, and buy another."

"There is not another Lona," groaned the old man, "not another. She is my wife—my life—my love;" and here he cut a great caper, and brought his right foot down with a flop. "I will never leave her."

"You must."

"I wont;" and down he sat upon the deck, and looked as obstinate as a wooden image.

They tried to persuade him to leave, and he would not. Then they put him in the hold, and after a due delay told him his wife had gone ashore. This raised him to a pitch of frenzy, and they bore him to the land, in company with his son, to go and find her.

"Which way is she gone?" asked the old man.

"She travelled east," replied Dick Dasher.

And away went the old sinner eastward, with Jamrac following behind. Neither of them knew when they were landed, and probably believed they had been put upon the coast. How and when they found out their error, and what they did, was never known on board the "Spartan," as from that hour no soul on board saw them again. They probably found a spot in the isle where they could live on nothing a year, and without work, and all settled down in a life so suited to the Oriental taste.

It was, indeed, a beautiful isle. The lotus eaters would have revelled in it, for there at eve you could sit down between the sun and moon and look up at so much beauty that it intoxicated you; and when later on the stars came out they shone strong enough to cast faint shadows on the earth.

No wonder that Will Warren came quickly out of the sickness brought on by starvation. Every breath of air was new life; and ere a week had passed he was pacing the deck between Cecil and Dick, with Jumbo rolling his black eyes in ecstasy behind.

"It was a narrow escape, Dick," he said.

"Very," replied Dick; "but I did not think the fellow so bad."

"You do not know his history so well as I do," replied Will, musingly. "He has a heart as black as night, but I'll bring him to shame and sorrow yet."

"Bring him to death," said Cecil.

"I quash him like a blue-bottle fly," suggested Jumbo from the rear. "Oh! catches him, Massa Will, and leab me to do de business."

"No, Jumbo, I will not make you my executioner," said Will, turning to him. "I will punish him. By the way, didn't you tell me that Turkish woman is still on board?"

"She is."

"Why does she stay?"

"I don't know."

"Send her away."

"She won't go," said Dick; "she says it is certain death if she goes back again."

"Then she must go to England," said Will, impulsively. "But it is an awkward business; I would not have Minnie know it for the world."

"You leave her to me," said Cecil, calmly; "she and I understand each other."

He spoke with a pious belief in his being able to subdue the fair Lona, and after a brief interview with her he returned to his brother with the intelligence that she was quite willing to be put ashore.

All she asked was to be introduced to the chief magistrate or pasha in the town.

They soon found him, and, having seen Lona, he took charge of her.

(To be continued.)



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A YOUNG MIDDY.—To remove stains from the hands, damp the hands first with water, then rub them with tartaric acid, or salt of lemons, as you would with soap; rinse them, and rub them dry. Tartaric acid or salt of lemons will quickly remove stains from white muslin or linens. Put less than half a teaspoonful of the salt or acid into a tablespoonful of water; wet the stain with it, and lay it in the sun for at least an hour; wet it once or twice with cold water during the time. If this does not quite remove it, repeat the acid-water, and lay it in the sun. Many thanks for yours and your messmates' complimentary letter.

HARRY ASHLEY.—Tincture of rhatany, in combination with charcoal, in the proportion of one part of three of the charcoal, forms an excellent tooth powder. Perfume for the handkerchief:—Spirits of wine, 1 pint; oil of lavender, 3 fluid drachms; oil of bergamot, 3 fluid drachms; extract of ambergris, 6 minims; camphor, 1 grain. To be well shaken every day during a fortnight, and then filtered.

WILL DIVER.—All back numbers of the CHAMPION JOURNAL are on hand. If any difficulty arises in procuring them, send direct to the office.

THE CHAMPION FISHERMAN.—To cook shrimps you should have plenty of boiling water ready, add salt in the proportion of six ounces to the gallon, put your shrimps in, and in about six minutes take one out and see if it will part from the shell easily, and if it does the shrimps are done. Have ready a red hot poker, and before taking the shrimps off the fire, stir them well with it.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—To take out stains from mahogany furniture: Stains and spots may be taken out of mahogany furniture by the use of a little aquafortis, or oxalic acid and water, by rubbing the part with the liquid by means of a cork till the colour is restored, observing afterwards to well wash the wood with water, and to dry and polish as usual. Thanks, we have not forgotten you.

HAPPY HAL.—The three words, "dolce far niente," are Italian, and signify that "it is sweet to do nothing," intimating thereby that idle time spent in absolute vacancy hath its charms.

SCHOOL BOY.—You will gain little by night study. Better go to bed early, and rise soon in the morning. It is much better for your health and eyesight. Writing fair.

INDUSTRIOUS.—To make marking ink. — Dissolve separately one ounce of nitrate of silver (4s. 6d. per ounce), and one and a half ounces of sub-carbonate of soda (best washing soda), in distilled or rain water; mix the solutions, and collect and wash the precipitate in a filter; whilst still moist rub it up in a marble or wedgwood mortar with three drachms of tartaric acid; add two ounces of distilled water; mix six drachms of white sugar, ten drachms of powdered gum arabic, half an ounce of archil, and water to make up six ounces in measure.

RAVEN'S NEST.—We greatly sympathise with you, and others, for the sad bereavement caused by the late disastrous calamity. We have continually urged the necessity of learning to swim. As it is your wish to go to sea lose not the present opportunity, for, though you may imagine differently—no captain will allow you overboard to learn to swim; the ravenous shark is ever watchful for its prey, and in some rivers the alligator or crocodile abounds so plentifully that you are never safe. Mr. Alfred King kindly publishes the following for the benefit of non-swimmers:—"The Regent Swimming Club, of which I am a member, gives gratuitous tuition at the St. Pancras Baths to any person applying by letter to their hon. secretary, Mr. A. G. Supton, when he is at once placed under efficient instructors. Since our action in this direction one or two other clubs have issued a like notice, and I trust it will not be long before many more will do likewise. Swimming is receiving great attention, notably at the Industrial School for Boys, Maitland Park, Haverstock Hill, where, out of several hundred boys, there is a very small percentage who cannot swim. I would, therefore, impress upon non-swimmers to at once make a commencement, and I am sure success will shortly crown their efforts, and they will always look back with pride and pleasure to the first time they were able to swim across the bath. If this course was adopted I am positive we should not have the appalling loss of 2000 lives annually from drowning, which can, to a very considerable extent, be avoided.—ALFRED KING, Regent Swimming Club, St. Pancras Baths, King-street, Camden Town."

BOYS! BOYS! BOYS!

GRAND CHAMPION JOURNAL PRIZE DISTRIBUTION.

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59303	79677	57182	67274	84946	83508
31562	76436	31592	76516	56492	56462
88210	84348	84588	84588	31442	84528
31472	65877	87125	17133	91250	65847
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72624	67514	72594	85356	59583	72564
59613	67484	84736	72174	69867	69807
84766	74204	35293	66536	57662	85566
31273	78355	59643	73319	8777	68335
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LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT!!

In our Next Week's Number of the

CHAMPION JOURNAL

We commence our Grand New Story,
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HAPPY HAL AND HIS BRAVE BOYS,

Being the Second Part of the Celebrated Story,
"HAPPY HAL; OR, TRUE TO THE CORE."

The success of this Jolly School Tale is well renowned, as it deserves to be, and we have prevailed on the Author to pen, expressly for THE CHAMPION JOURNAL,

HAPPY HAL AND HIS BRAVE BOYS.

We need scarcely remind our readers that they have a great treat in store; but they can, and we feel assured will, confer a favour on us by telling such friends as have not as yet subscribed to our Journal that, although

"HAPPY HAL; OR, TRUE TO THE CORE"

Has been admired for over fifty weeks by the
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HAPPY HAL AND HIS BRAVE BOYS

Will read entirely like a New Story.

Your old friend, Phil Catchit, will make you laugh at the numerous scrapes he gets into, and Herbert Wanstead will continue to be Happy Hal's chum.

READ How Samson bought a Shooting Gallery, and what became of it.

READ How Mr. Splitback, entering into married life, opened a rival School, and how he managed it.

READ How Phil Catchit fought Sooty Joe, the sweep, and how both of them appeared before the magistrates.

READ How Mr. Bullyboy becomes possessed of a great secret, and what he did with it.

READ How Phil Catchit was stopped by a bull, and what it did with him.

READ How Happy Hal—honest as the day, full of fun and frolic, and still true to the core—triumphed over his foes, and obtained the esteem of his friends.

LOOK OUT, LADS ALL, FOR

HAPPY HAL AND HIS BRAVE BOYS,

Who will come to you as the nights lengthen, and amuse you till summer shall come again.

BOYS! BOYS!! BOYS!!

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A GLORIOUS TREAT.

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And Gifts Immediately.

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Several new and spirit-stirring Tales are now in active preparation.

BOYS, ACQUAINT YOUR FRIENDS.

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